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THE HISTORY  
OF  
PROTESTANTISM  
IN FRANCE,

FROM

THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE REVOCATION OF  
THE EDICT OF NANTES.

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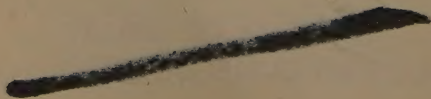
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# THE HISTORY OF PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

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## CHAPTER I.

PERIOD PREVIOUS TO LOUIS XII. A.D. 1497.

PERHAPS there is no country in the world, when we except the Holy Land, where the entire history of religion, taken in connexion with the circumstances which have surrounded it, has been at once more interesting and more painful, than in France.

In France, the Christian religion has uniformly been placed between two enemies ;—on one side, superstition ; on the other, infidelity. An escape from the former has too often caused a fall into the latter.

In no country has the history of persecution and martyrdom been more striking than in France, whether the persecutors were the furious worshippers of the gods of ancient Rome and Gaul, or the unhappily blinded and bigoted disciples of the church which succeeded them. In the first ages of Christianity, the martyrs

of Lyons and Vienne witnessed a good confession in the midst of pagan animosity ; and, to mock their Christian hope of a joyful resurrection, their proud adversaries cast the ashes of their burned bodies into the river Rhone. But the spirit that animated them revived in many a future race : and the Protestants of professedly Christian France, under various denominations, and in various ages, have suffered for conscience' sake, with a constancy and zeal equal to that of the martyrs of heathen Gaul.

The name of Protestant is comparatively new, and custom has led to its not being applied, in general, to any period previous to the time of Martin Luther, or of the Reformation. Protestantism, however, is as old as the corruptions or errors of the Christian church. The disciples were called Christians, first at Antioch ; and Christians were called Protestants, first in Germany : but applying the term as it will here be used, to all who protested against the errors which began to prevail in the church, from the time of its establishment as the religion of the Roman empire—we can find Protestants, or protesters, in every age. In searching for them, however, the inquirer should bear in mind, that, as the darkness of the professedly Christian world, and the errors and corruptions of the then extensively established church of Rome, drew on more deeply, all who in any way dissented from it or its errors, were styled heretics. And as the only



historians of the dark ages were of some of those religious orders, among whom the little learning left in the world was sheltered, we must not expect to find clear evidence of the truth in all cases ; it being, doubtless, often the fact, that the so-called heretics, to whom almost every strange crime was imputed, were simply disciples of Christ, who desired to hold fast the truths which the professing church had let slip ; and to maintain the simple faith of the gospel as it had been delivered to their fathers.

To the same cause we may, perhaps, ascribe the fact, that some authors, of much learning, and of no degree of bigotry, following the ancient monkish memorialists of the dark ages, have classed among heretics, and holders of strange doctrine, persons who might here and there have appeared in the world to hold the lamp of truth, while darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Thus the people called Albigenses have been judged of by an eminent writer,\* in a manner that appears unreasonable. It is forgotten, apparently, that their enemies were, not their judges only, but their historians also. No existing document of their own is brought forward as the exponent of their faith ; no Protestant historian of the time, who has recorded their conduct or their creed, is adduced in evidence of the asserted fact, that they were heretics and Manicheans. Happily, however, the Benedictine monks—the most pious

\* Hallam : History of Literature.

and learned, and therefore the most tolerant of the numerous religious orders which arose in Europe—have left to the diligent, impartial, and freedom-loving historian, ample details whereby to work out the facts of the case of the Albigenses; and, in very briefly introducing it with the History of Protestantism in France, we shall follow only the course of materials which Sismondi and similar writers have collected.

It is not intended to allude to all the controversialists who, either collectively or individually, opposed, or separated from the errors and abuses which continued to increase in the church of Rome, until, at the epoch of the Albigenses, the twelfth century, they reached their acmé.

In order to enumerate all these protesters, it would be necessary to go back to the time of Vigilantius; with whom many of the French clergy took part in his opposition to martyr-worship, an early error into which Christians fell, through a natural, but overwrought veneration for the dead who died in the Lord, during the terrible struggle of Christianity with paganism.

Then, also, we should have to trace the rise of image-worship, which was likewise protested against; the doctrines of purgatory and prayers for the dead; and various other superadded articles of faith, against which protests were continually made; and, above all, that great theme of controversy, transubstantiation, which

drew forth the strongest protests from the bishop of Tours.

To write all this would be to write a church history; but to do this would show that Protestantism in France, as well as in other places, was coeval with error in the church, and with Popery at Rome.

We know nothing of the doctrines of the Manicheans except from the judgment of those who condemned them. That universally reprobated sect left no written documents, no religious forms, no confession of faith, by which, out of their own mouths, they might be convicted. Some absurd and contradictory tenets are imputed to them; and it would be as impossible to undertake their defence, as it would be useless to search into the cause of their condemnation; that condemnation was apparently just. But it became general, in the ages preceding the reformation, to call all persons who dissented from the church of Rome, Manicheans—thus alone leaving us room to suspect that there *might* be good among the branded sect, which arose in the church just at the time when its early simplicity was departing.

The Paulicians, a race of decided Protestants, who appeared so early as 660, are said by an infidel historian, Gibbon, "sincerely to have condemned the errors of the Manicheans," but yet they have generally been identified with them. The Paulicians derived their religious tenets simply from a Bible; a rare gift, bestowed on their leader, Constantine: they were named

Paulicians from professing to take the writings of St. Paul as their code of faith and practice. Like the reformers of the sixteenth century, they did away, most unscrupulously, with images, relics, and martyr-worship. Persecution scattered them from the east; and they came into the south, and were known in both Italy and France.

Bossuet, the eloquent preacher of the Roman Catholic church, states that, in the year 1007, some heretics were burned at the city of Orleans, because, "as it is well known, that the Roman laws condemned the Manicheans to death, the holy king Robert (of France) judged these people worthy of the fire."

This is the first Protestant immolation we record in France. These early martyrs were only a branch of the great tree whose roots were still to remain in the soil.

The history of the people called Vaudois, or Waldenses, is too well known, and has been too often repeated, to need repetition here; and is, besides, not legitimately included in that of Protestantism in France.\*

Lyons, the see of Ireneus, the pupil of the martyred Polycarp, is, from the earliest age of Christianity, famous in that history. It was the zeal of one of its merchants, Valdo, that led to the error of attributing to him the first appearance of the Protestant religion in that country. Valdo attained greater celebrity from

\* A Monthly Volume—"Sketches of the Waldenses," has been published by the Religious Tract Society.

translating and reading the Gospels to his more ignorant neighbours. His conduct was represented to the pope, he was obliged to fly from Lyons, and finally retired to Bohemia, where he probably introduced that spirit of Protestantism for which Huss afterwards died.

We turn now to the story of the Albigenes, entwined as it is in the lamentable and interesting one of Languedoc and Provence. But we must first describe the state of those pleasant provinces in which religion sprang up in a soil that might not appear congenial to it, and which yet lends it an additional interest. The account here given is chiefly, and briefly, extracted from Sismondi.

Languedoc, Provence, Catalonia, and the surrounding provinces which depended on the king of Aragon, were peopled by an industrious and intelligent race, addicted to commerce and the arts, and still more to poetry. They had formed the Provençal language, which, separating itself from the French, was distinguished by greater harmony, richness, and picturesqueness of expression. This language, studied by all the genius of the age, dedicated to politeness and song, appeared destined to become the first and most elegant of the languages of Europe. Those who professed it had renounced the name of Frenchmen for that of Provençals. They wished to form themselves into a distinct nation, and to separate absolutely from the French; to whom they were, indeed, inferior in the arts of war, but whom they greatly

excelled in all the attainments of civilisation. These people were far in advance of a barbarous age.

Raymond Bérenger, count of Barcelona, acquired the dominion of Provence in right of his wife, and introduced there that spirit of liberty and chivalry, that taste for the elegant arts and sciences, which the Arabians had brought to Spain, and which gave birth to the poetical spirit that shone out at once over Provence and all the south of Europe, like an electric flash in the midst of the most palpable darkness, illuminating all things with its brightness.

We must not, however, enter on a theme pleasing and romantic, but unsuited to our graver history—the troubadours of gay Provence, their songs and harps, and courts of gaiety and politeness. But knowledge has always brought in its train rebellion against superstition; and, therefore, Protestantism is, in a great degree, connected with the refinement and civilisation of Provence. A people had grown up, even among these gay troubadours, who exercised the privilege of reason, and dared to question the truth of what they were taught implicitly to believe. The numerous courts of the small princes aspired to be models of taste and politeness. They lived in festivity; their chief occupations were tournaments, courts of gaiety, and poetry, where verses were recited or sung, and prizes awarded. The cities were numerous and flourishing; their forms of government nearly republican. They

had consuls chosen by the people, and possessed the privilege of forming communes, which rendered them nearly equal to the celebrated Italian republics with which they traded.

They had been obliged, by this commercial intercourse, to mix with both Moors and Jews, held by their fellow-catholics of the time in utter detestation, instead of being regarded with the compassion of Christian love. Bigotry, in consequence, prevailed to a less degree in civilised Provence, while their French neighbours were still subjected to its iron sway.

Among them, and beneath the shelter of their liberal-minded princes, the Protestants who denied "the sovereign authority of the pope, the efficacy of prayers for the dead, the doctrine of purgatory," and some other tenets of Rome, found protection, and multiplied to an extraordinary extent.

In the year 1147, and again in 1181, missionaries were sent by Rome to convert these heretics. We blame not the effort, so long as no other means are resorted to. It is the duty of all to endeavour to direct those whom they really believe to be in error into the right path. But these missionaries made no way among the people; their own pastors, who taught them from the Scriptures, received more attention.

At length, pope Innocent III. ascended the pontifical throne, and while his genius governed the political affairs of Europe, directed the arms of the crusaders against Constantinople, controlled or menaced the monarchs of Germany,

Spain, France, or Hungary, it inspected the spiritual state of Christendom, observed the growth of heresy, and put forth its energies to arrest the progress of that mental power which was inimical to the boundless sway of the mortal man whom his subjects could ignorantly dare to style "Our Lord God the Pope!"

Two Cistercian monks, armed with full authority, were sent to Languedoc; but, notwithstanding their violent proceedings, even to an abuse of their powers, they met with so little success, and found the number of heretics so vast, that it was determined still more strenuous measures should be taken.

Every true friend to the church was called on to deliver up even his brother to death, if he continued in opposition to it; they were forbidden to have any dealings with the heretics; "so that they, being in want of the necessaries of life, may be compelled to submit to the church."

Raymond, count of Toulouse, was the chief of the princes who refused to murder, or cause to be murdered, his unoffending subjects; and he was, therefore, accused of being himself infected by their heresy.

Dominic, the Spaniard, and the father of the Inquisition, and Francis d'Assise, the founder of the Franciscan order, at this time earned the title of Saint, conferred upon them by their church. Two and two, their barefooted preaching monks were sent out, to draw from the simple, and perhaps incautiously zealous people,



a statement of their doctrines, which were sometimes, perhaps, erroneously described, and at others wilfully misrepresented; gaining also, in this way, a knowledge of the most eminent of the Provençal heretics.

The true adherents of Rome were asked why they did not unite to exterminate their heretical neighbours. The answer was, "They are our friends; we live among them, and see the goodness of their lives." But a favourable opportunity for putting down by force what neither threats nor arguments could lessen, was offered at this juncture, by an interval of repose to the tumult caused in Europe by the crusades to the east for the recovery of the holy land, or of the holy sepulchre. There were many idle arms in France; and a crusade against the Albigenses was proposed, instead of one against the Turks. A council was held concerning them at a place named Albi, from which, it is most probable, the above name was given to the Protestants of Languedoc and Provence.

Count Raymond of Toulouse was one of those mild, but uncertain and undecided characters who, however friendly to truth they may be found, and, when truth meets no great opposition, are, in the event of a contest, more likely to injure, than to sustain, the cause to which they are attached. His was a struggle for the preservation of his own rights, and for his own dominions; but in that struggle were blended the spiritual interests, the lives, and

properties of persecuted Christians. Such was the case with many a noble lord and gallant knight of that period, who professed to have "no quarrel with the church," if the church would not quarrel with them. It was probably that aspiration to nationality, that desire to separate from the higher authority of the French sovereign, on whom their lord was dependent, which united with the spiritual wrath of the pontiff, in bringing upon this once happy region the weight of that political power which crushed and uprooted from its native soil the spirit of the gay, poetical Provençals, and the existence there of the poor pious Albigenes. The grey frieze of the latter was seen mingled with the bright armour of the former, and the strictness and severity of the one was strongly opposed to the polite, but too dissipated manners of the other. Yet their history and their fate were one. Political and religious interests blended in the conflict; and in reading narratives of such a struggle, we should always remember that, with these two classes, real heretics and fanatics are sure to spring up, as tares among wheat, in every outburst of mental liberty or awakening of religious zeal.

A nobler character than count Raymond was his nephew, the young viscount of Beziers; the cruelly betrayed victim of the church of which he remained a member, even while fighting for his own possessions, or for the lives and liberties of his Protestant people.

"Pestilential man!" thus wrote pope Innocent

to the sovereign count of Toulouse, "what pride has seized your heart to brave the Divine wrath by protecting the enemies of the faith? Do you not fear eternal flames? ought you not to dread the temporal chastisements you have provoked by so many crimes?"

Raymond, however, at first, believed that his own interest lay in uniting with his threatened subjects.

The crusade was then published in France, and the terms of the papal grant offered to Philip Augustus, the king of that country, in return for carrying his arms against these heretical provinces, were, temporally, the dominions of the dispossessed Raymond, and, spiritually, the plenary indulgence granted to the eastern crusaders.\*

Frightened into submission, the count of Toulouse engaged to exterminate the obnoxious Protestants from his states; but his heart was not in the work. The pope's legate, Castelnau, calling the count a perjurer and supporter of heretics, left him in a passion, and was, soon after, killed by one of Raymond's followers. This gave fresh occasion against him. He was excommunicated; and the following is an extract from the papal bull on the subject:—"And, as following the sanctions of the holy fathers, we must not keep faith with those who keep not faith with God, and are separated from

\* It will be seen that, about three hundred years after this time, one of the parliaments of Paris applauded the memory of this monarch for burning six hundred heretics in one day.

the church, we discharge, by our apostolic authority, all who believe themselves bound to this count by any oath of alliance or fidelity; and permit any Catholic men to pursue his person, to occupy and retain his territories, especially for the purpose of exterminating heresy."

The preaching of this home crusade was scarcely less ardent than that for the holy land had been. Arnold Amalric, the fiercely zealous abbot of Citeaux, was as successful as Peter the hermit, in gaining crusaders to exterminate the infidels at home, who were declared to be infinitely more hateful than Turks and Saracens.

War was then a passion and a pastime. The warriors who had fought in the east were glad to fight again; and men who had not taken the cross for Palestine, willingly did so for Provence; the highest and the noblest, as well as the common soldier, joining in the bloody work with all the ardour and confidence of well-doing, which the exhortations and rewards of their church inspired.

It will now appear hardly credible that an army of three hundred thousand men, for this purpose, placed a symbol of the Christian faith, a scarlet cross, on the front of their white mantles, wearing it there instead of on the shoulder, as a badge of distinction from the eastern crusaders.

The high-minded, gallant, young Raymond, of Beziers, was twenty-four years of age; he

had never left the church of Rome, though he had been educated by a pious Albigenian tutor, and, during a long minority, placed under the charge of the count de Foix, one of the chief of the Protestants. He was such a young knight as his pleasant land produced—brave, honourable, free, and fearless. With him the question was not one of religion, but of liberty and justice. His uncle, the count of Toulouse, terrified at the coming storm, shrank from a war with the church. To avert this danger, Beziers accompanied him to a conference with the leader of the crusade, the abbot of Citeaux. To him both these princes declared their freedom from all taint of heresy, their innocence of the death of Castelnau, and their desire to be heard by the pope himself, and to propitiate his clemency.

Finding they had no favour to expect from the haughty and cruel priest, young Raymond told his uncle that their only hope now lay in making as good a defence against the crusading hosts as they could. After some altercation, they parted to pursue their respective plans; Beziers, to fortify his castles and prepare his troops, and the count, to endeavour to propitiate Innocent. The papal terms offered to the latter were, that he should join the crusade against his friends and subjects, and deliver up seven strong castles as a guarantee for his fidelity. In return, he was, in due time, to obtain—absolution!

Innocent wrote to his legate, saying, "We

counsel you, with the apostle Paul, to employ craft with this count. We must attack separately those who are separated from unity. Employ towards him a wise dissimulation, that the other heretics may be more easily defeated, and that, afterwards, we may crush him when he shall be left alone:" thus quoting Scripture, as, alas! we know the author of all evil once did.

In the spring of the year 1209, the crusading host—whose numbers may be better accounted for by the fact that the term of their service was only for forty days—poured into the fair region of Provence; the preaching monks heading the armies. The unhappy count of Toulouse surrendered his castles, and was led into the church of St. Gilles, in his own capital, with a cord about his neck, and scourged round the altar in token of reconciliation with the pope. After which discipline, he was allowed to take the cross, and assist in the slaughter of unoffending people.

His nephew Raymond sounded the tocsin of war through his petty states, and aroused his vassals and friends to a deadly struggle. Castle after castle fell, and heretics, poor and simple, or rich and noble, were burned in piles. The crusaders were led by the terrible Simon de Montfort, a man formidable as a warrior, and austere, fanatical, and cruel, as a religious leader. The young Raymond was thus menaced with dangers to which he could only oppose despairing bravery and the righteousness of his cause.

The crusaders encamped before his capital, the city of Beziers. He had made every possible provision, and desired his people to defend themselves to the last. The bishop treacherously offered the garrison their lives, on the part of the abbot of Citeaux, if they delivered up the heretics that were within the walls. "Tell the legate," said these gallant men, who had to fear a death by famine, as well as by the sword, "that rather than commit such a baseness, we would eat our own children."

The crusaders suddenly obtained possession of the city, proceeding through the gates together with the garrison, who had made a sally on them. "They entered the city of Beziers," says an ancient and anonymous writer of the time, "and killed more people than ever was known in the world.\* They spared neither young nor old, nor infants at the breast. . . They that could, did retreat into the great church of St. Nazarius, both men and women; the chaplains whereof caused the bells to ring: but neither the sound of the bells, nor the sight of the chaplains in their priestly habits, nor of the clerks, could save any from being put to the sword. One only escaped; the rest were all slain, and died. Nothing so pitiable was ever heard of, or done: and when the city was pillaged, it was set on fire, so that it was all destroyed and burned, as it appears at this day. No living thing was left, which was a cruel vengeance, seeing that

\* Such an exaggerated style of expression is rather common to that period.

the said viscount was neither a heretic nor of the sect."

It was on this occasion that the well-known answer of the abbot of Citeaux was given to those who, naturally, inquired how they were to distinguish the faithful Catholics from the numerous heretics who were sheltered in Beziers—"Kill them all!—the Lord will know those that are his." The number killed was said to be exaggerated, and the abbot, in writing to the pope, estimated *the truth* at fifteen thousand!

Young Raymond, burning with grief and resentment, shut up himself and his remaining army, friends and subjects, in the strong fortress of Carcassone. That fine feudal relic of the middle ages still remains to bear witness to a glorious, but fatal struggle for civil and religious liberty. It surmounts a vast platform of rock, rising out of one of the plains so general in Languedoc; and from its still-existing battlements may be seen the plain beneath, which fancy could cover with the white-cloaked crusaders of Rome, the chivalrous aspect of the warriors of France, the "pomp and circumstance of war," arrayed against a small and scanty band of harmless people, and the brave young knight, who stood at bay within the solid walls of that frowning castle. The voice of piety, the prayer of faith, might be heard within; while without were seen the gay and gallant soldiers, to whom battle was a sport; the zealot, who now fought for salvation; the penitent, who



fought for pardon ; and the needy, who fought for plunder.

And within these walls, too, were some who had lived in pleasure, the lovers of gaiety and song, whose hearts, without dissenting from the church of Rome, spurned at tyranny, temporal or spiritual, and who had resolved to die as men and soldiers, rather than live degraded as slaves, like Raymond of Toulouse.

Don Pedro of Aragon, the most gallant monarch of his time, came to the camp of the crusaders, in hopes of making some terms for his valiant nephew. The besiegers had been twice repulsed with terrible loss, and were getting dissatisfied with their service. The abbot and De Montfort engaged the king of Aragon to visit young Raymond, who candidly told him he would be glad to make terms, if possible. "I see clearly," he said, "that we cannot maintain ourselves, on account of the multitude of peasants, women, and children, who have taken refuge with us ; they die daily, and I cannot reckon their numbers. But were it only myself and people, I swear to you I would die of famine rather than surrender to the abbot."

The terms offered to the brave defender of Carcassone, were, permission to leave it with twelve persons, all the others to be left to the mercy of Arnold Amalric and De Montfort.

"Sooner than leave the least of my people at his mercy," said young Raymond, "I will be flayed alive."

No sooner was the answer returned, than a

furious assault was made on the walls. It was again unsuccessful ; even the women and children fought, pouring boiling water down on the assailants.

The forty days' service was nearly expired, and many of the crusaders were ready to renounce a renewal of theirs. Their leaders became uneasy ; but Raymond, unconscious of what was passing in their camp, was still more so. The horrors of famine were felt among his people ; the cisterns were drying up ; wives and mothers, as well as soldiers and captains, looked to him as their sole resource. The abbot, in this extremity, sent to propose an amicable conference. The incautious, though honourable, young lord, gladly accepted of it, and, attended by three hundred of his chosen knights and officers, went out to the crusaders' camp.

He was received by De Montfort and the abbot, who was the pope's legate ; and, while pleading his own cause, and that of the persecuted Albigenses, the latter coolly told him that his people might do as well as they could for themselves, but as for him, he was a prisoner.

His three hundred followers were already in custody, and he was consigned to the charge of the duke of Burgundy, who, proving too lenient to his noble prisoner, he was afterwards given over to the savage De Montfort, and, it is believed, poisoned in his prison.

At sunrise next morning, the crusaders pre-

pared for an easy assault on Carcassone. They advanced with shoutings against it ; but there was no response ; the stillness of death was over it ; they feared a deceit, but entered, and found it empty. The poor people had escaped by a secret cavern. The walls of that fine fortress were left, and still remain, a memorial of the times of the Albigenes. An *auto da fé* was formed of four hundred persons, instead of the thousands who would otherwise have been sacrificed.

This episode of the Albigensian crusaders has been chosen as the most interesting ; but there are numerous other occurrences of a similar kind, which are equally connected with the melancholy story of Protestantism in Provence.

At the castle of Menerbe, De Montfort said, " Mass had not been sung for thirty years." The earl who defended it would not turn Romanist ; he was taken, and thrown into a prison, where he was suffocated, and his wife, daughter, and sister, burned in one fire. La Vaur was also taken ; its lord Aimeric gibbeted, with eighty others, and his noble sister, called the lady of La Vaur, thrown into a pit, which was then filled with stones.

The brave king of Aragon, a celebrated knight and troubadour, or poet, of his times, fell fighting for the Provençals at the battle of Murêt. De Montfort came and looked at his body, and is said to have shed tears over it. Singular power of superstition ! how strangely

does it pervert the affections, and darken the human understanding !

De Montfort fell at Toulouse ; for count Raymond's submissions purchased him no peace, either in his states, for which other claimants were ready, nor in his conscience, which was divided between devotion to his church and regard for his people. He was forced to arms again, and recovered his capital. De Montfort besieged it, and was hearing mass, when news was brought to him of a sally of the garrison. He wished to wait, for it was the moment of the elevation of the host, but, unable to refrain, he exclaimed aloud, " Lord, let thy servant depart in peace !" and rushed forth to head his army. A stone, cast from the wall, it is believed by a woman's hand, struck him on the head, and killed the ferocious warrior, and scourge of the Albigenses. A.D. 1218.

Raymond's death soon followed. He was one who halted between two opinions. In his last days, he made himself a monk, and kissed with devotion the mantle of his order as he died. Yet he was excommunicated, and his body denied burial. The pope himself departed from the world about the same time ; but his successor trod in his steps against the heretics of the south of France.

Simon de Montfort had acquired the territories of young Raymond, and, so long as they were in his possession, they would be kept free from what was called the Albigensian heresy. While he lived, the whole south of France fre-

quently either streamed in blood, or glowed with fire. "For twenty years, were continually seen massacres and tortures. Religion was overthrown, knowledge extinguished, and humanity trampled under foot."

Pope Honorius III. invited the French king, Louis VIII., to take arms against the still existing Albigenes and Provençals; Louis obeyed, and besieged Avignon, which was defended by the young count of Toulouse, earl Raymond's son. Disease in the French army cut off numbers, but the pope's legate, demanding a conference, contrived to give admission to the troops, who took the city by surprise. After the capture, likewise, of Toulouse, Raymond could no longer make head against his enemies; from the time of his submission, the subjugation of heresy, so called, in Languedoc and Provence, may be dated.

On the death of Raymond, Languedoc, once a separate sovereignty, was united to the kingdom of France, under the reign of Louis IX., called St. Louis, A.D. 1249. In 1245, Provence had passed into the possession of the cruel Charles of Anjou. Thus the sovereign families disappeared in the south of France; and the Provençals, and all who spoke their language, became subject to a rival nation, which they had always regarded with the most violent aversion. "In their servitude, a few plaintive songs of grief were heard; but the muses fled from a soil polluted with carnage."

Civilisation, learning, gaiety, and song, fled

from the once happy and polite Provence. But where fled they who had cultivated in peace a higher science? who had, in simplicity, after the manner which men called heresy, worshipped the God of their fathers? Poets, romancers, historians, deplore the fate of the troubadours and knights of Provence; few follow forth the escaped of Israel, who wandered away to some mountain refuge, where, in the shadow of the lonely hills, they could serve God in secret:—

“ For the strength of the hills we bless thee,  
Our God, our fathers’ God.  
Thou hast made thy children mighty,  
By the touch of the mountain sod;  
Thou hast fixed their ark of refuge,  
Where the spoiler’s foot ne’er trod;  
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,  
Our God, our fathers’ God.”

In these hills, the remnant of the pious Albigenes, when their defenders, their nobles, and princes, were no more, sought a refuge; and there, for the space of two hundred and fifty years, we shall find them continuing to carry on the unbroken line of Protestantism in France: a band, indeed, reserved as sheep appointed to the slaughter; often sought out by the inquisitorial eye of bigotry, and made known by one of those cruel massacres of the Vaudois, with which the world is too familiarly acquainted. By this term, Vaudois, they became generally known, being blended with the Protestant dwellers in the valleys of Piedmont; and as such we pursue their history no further.

Though sheltered in the mountains of Provence and Dauphiné, Protestantism was effect-

ually silenced in the south of France by the invention of the monk Dominic, the inquisition, established at Toulouse for that purpose, A.D. 1221. There, until the ravages of the French revolution, was still to be seen the cell which Dominic—strangely denominated saint—inhabited, when he came to inspect this first germ of that horrible plant, which, in its maturity, cast the gloom of its deadly shadow over the liberties, consciences, and lives of men.

## CHAPTER II.

LOUIS XII. 1497—1515.

UP to the time of Louis XII., the reign which immediately preceded the end of the great reformation, Protestants still existed in France, though all other titles were then merged in the general one of Vaudois.

The mountains of the beautiful province of Dauphiné had cherished the descendants of the Protestants of Languedoc and Provence, and in the mountain region of the latter once devastated land, they had found a retired, but not always secure, asylum. There, mingled with the Vaudois, the escaped fugitives of Lyons and its vicinity, they passed under the same title, as they had maintained the same faith. They were ready to hail a new generation of Protestants.

No sooner did the news of the reformation, or rather of the revived doctrines of the gospel, contended for in Paris by a doctor and student of theology, reach to these mountain-dwellings, than many a Protestant voice broke forth to



welcome and encourage their brethren in the faith. The cruel result to themselves we shall be obliged to notice in the succeeding reign. At present, we will not precede the course of our narrative.

The difficulties of Protestantism in France have been most remarkable. A slight turn of the balance only has often seemed wanting to make that fine country a Protestant one. If the reformation had gained ground in the reign of Louis XII. instead of that of his gay and proud successor, Francis I., there is little doubt that it would have triumphed. And, again, if the latter generous and chivalrous, though arbitrary prince, had not yielded to the suggestions of ill advisers and the considerations of worldly policy, under what favourable auspices would it not have progressed!

As we follow the course of history, men may deplore the seeming results of chance; but they ought to know, notwithstanding, that the Lord reigneth, be the inhabitants of the world never so unquiet—"Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

The convocation of Catholic clergy assembled by Louis at Tours, decided that the king had power to make war upon the pope. The deputies of the still oppressed Vaudois, or Protestants, obtained an audience of the same tolerant monarch; and, having been informed by them that "they believed in the Scriptures, the ten commandments, and the symbol, or creed, but not in the pope, nor in the doctrines

he taught," the king sent commissioners to Merindol and Cabrières, places then inhabited by these Protestants—to inquire into the facts of their case. The commissioners reported that, among them, baptism was administered, the articles of belief and ten commandments taught, the sabbath solemnly observed, and the word of God expounded." On hearing which, Louis replied that "these people were then much better than himself and his Catholic subjects." These two facts serve as brief indexes to the state of religious feeling at the epoch immediately preceding the great reformation of Martin Luther.

It is not intended to go into the history of the reformation in Germany, nor into that of the well-known French reformers. The object of this work is to exhibit the history of Protestantism in France. Some observations, however, must be made respecting the German reformation, with which, more or less closely, the religious changes of those times, in so many countries of Europe, were connected.

It is remarkable that most of the important discoveries of science, and many of the most rare departments of literature, have, at the same moment, been engaging the minds and labours of persons quite unknown to each other; who have each claimed the honour of an invention or discovery, each supposing his labours unshared by any individual. A single announcement has brought these simultaneous labours to light, and, in some cases, the world

has been, and is, at a loss to whom to ascribe the meed of priority.

So has it been with the reformation in the church. The leaven was at work in other places besides the convent of Wittenberg, but the process was unnoticed, until Martin Luther came forth from his cell and published aloud to a startled world the discoveries that others had made in secret. At the very time when Luther was going on his monkish mission to Rome, the doctrines of the gospel were being preached at Paris; and the work of the reformation had commenced in the university there, while Luther was yet an Augustine monk.

The principles and opinions of the reformation did not spread from Germany to France in the first instance; though the writings of the German controversialists afterwards greatly increased them. Neither did they extend from France to Germany; they sprang up independently in each country, and, it may be affirmed, by the same means. Luther found a Bible in his monastery, and Lefèvre had a Bible in his university.

Lefèvre was a devout doctor of the law, a preacher of the theology of his church, and a strict observer of all its rites—praying before the images of the virgin Mary up to about the fifty-fifth year of his life. At evening-time it became light with him, and the learned reformer, Beza, spoke of “that good old man” as being “the first who courageously began the revival of the pure religion of Jesus Christ.”

The object of Lefèvre was, not to discover or expose the errors or corruptions of the church of Rome, from which, indeed, he never completely separated—so much as to find for himself the consolations of the gospel, and to declare to others the way of salvation he had found. The light which he received with joy from the Bible, he diffused through the university in which he taught. It was not, then, the common people who heard him gladly, but young men whose minds burned for knowledge, and who crowded to his teaching, not only because he was beloved, but because the truth he taught was intelligible to anxious, inquiring, vigorous minds.

Among the pupils was William Farel, whose career, as one of the boldest of the reformers, is already sufficiently known. The same study of the Scriptures made Farel a convert to the gospel doctrines; and the closest intimacy subsisted between the venerable doctor and the more ardent disciple.

The character of Lefèvre is full of interest; and, were this a history of the reformation only, it would be pleasing to dwell upon it. He might be said by “preaching up Christ, to preach down error.” He scarcely appears in the light of a reformer, or controversialist, but in that of a teacher and preacher of religious truth.

Uncompromising, indeed, were the truths he taught. “Religion,” said Lefèvre, “has one Foundation, one Head—Jesus Christ. The

cross of Christ alone opens heaven and shuts the gate of hell." This was the doctrine with which Martin Luther, then in his convent, had afterwards to assail the foundation on which rest the erroneous doctrines of the papal church.

The principles of this Protestantism rapidly advanced at the celebrated university of Paris. The fact was soon made known, and in this manner. Cardinal de Vio, who afterwards disputed with Luther at Augsburg, wrote a treatise, in which he asserted that the pope was absolute monarch of the church. King Louis XII. desired to have the opinions of the university upon this treatise, and laid it before that body in the year 1512. The result was, that one of the youngest of the doctors, named James Allman, wrote an answer to the cardinal's statement, which he read before all the professors of theology; for which refutation he obtained great applause. Such, so far as Protestantism was concerned, was the state of affairs at the close of the reign of Louis XII.

Only three months before his death, that aged monarch was married to Mary of England, sister of Henry VIII., who, in her eighteenth year, and devotedly attached to another, was sacrificed to the political interests of a brother who really loved her. The princess Mary was attended to her new kingdom by a child who afterwards became too famous in our history—Anne Boleyn, then thirteen years old. In France, she is believed to have learned the

principles of the reformation which she afterwards favoured in England.

Louis was dying at the period of this ill-assorted marriage ; he survived it but a short time. At his death, the crown of France devolved to his cousin and son-in-law, Francis I.

The daughter of Louis XII. is well known in the interesting annals of the early-commenced reformation in Italy. Renée, duchess of Ferrara, was one of its first converts. But Ferrara, at whose gay court the celebrated Olympia Morata lived, was in the dominions of the pope, and was much too near to Rome to allow of the progress of the reformation. On the death of her husband, the duchess of Ferrara left that scene of religious persecution, and returned to her native land, where, at her residence near Paris, to which she afterwards retired, she sheltered the Protestants of France.

## CHAPTER III.

FRANCIS I. 1515—1547.

DURING the thirteenth century, a singular revolution was effected almost throughout Europe; not in the religion only which was then established, but in the politics which then prevailed.

That century is remarkable for having produced a number of men such as might each, singly, have reflected some lustre on his age. A Raphael alone would have done so. Talent, genius, and art, appeared at once to break forth upon the world where ignorance had reigned. Ignorance had long fostered superstition, and superstition had cherished ignorance. Darkness had covered "the earth, and gross darkness the people." The Spirit of the Lord was moving through the gloom, and when the time was fully come, and the professing church had too deplorably filled up the measure of her iniquity, "God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Irrespectively of the great reformers, whose learning and mental powers astonish us in a more enlightened age, the chief thrones of the

world were at that period filled by illustrious monarchs, and their courts frequented by men of literature, and by artists whose productions may never yet have been equalled by their successors. Such sovereigns as Charles v. emperor of Germany, Francis i. king of France, Henry viii. of England, pope Leo x. of Rome, and Solyman the Magnificent, sultan of the Turks, would probably have cast some celebrity over the age in which they contemporaneously appeared ; but undoubtedly their times have cast additional celebrity over them. These powers kept one another in balance ; their great talents, equal valour, and abilities, were constantly in opposition, and prevented any one from gaining undue pre-eminence ; while they afforded to all such occupation as contributed materially to favour the progress of opinion, and the course of innovation. To stop these, a more powerful opposition would have been at once excited, had the reigning pope been more active and more persecuting than was Leo x., the munificent patron of the arts, the lover of literature, luxury, and pleasure.

This epoch was undoubtedly a most important one in the history of Europe ; it is one that marks the termination of what are called the "middle ages," to a large portion of which the designation of "dark" may truly be given.

At the dawn of the sixteenth century, Europe appeared to be awaking to a general movement of mind ; a spirit of inquiry was aroused



and continued; passive obedience, enchaining mankind in the bonds of a blind superstition, was no longer universal; knowledge was increased, and it was still further extended by the use of the printing-press. The chief nations of Europe were in a transition state; and, if the vigorous minds that then threw off the long-prevailing lethargy, and dared to question the realities of the doctrines they were taught to believe, had not been guided into truth by the word of God, and by the power of his Spirit, undoubtedly they must have turned to infidelity as the result of their bold investigations.

Who, that reads the description of the court and clergy of Rome, when Luther visited it, during the pontificate of Julius II. (the predecessor of Luther's antagonist, Leo X.) but must see that the reformation was the only escape from infidelity:

What would probably have been the case with the reformers, had not the Spirit of God guided and sanctified the efforts of their minds, has too generally occurred in the land of which we write. In France, there have been, and are, men—yes, and even women also—of intellect too elevated to believe *all* that their church teaches, or to practise all it requires. They unhappily turn aside, disgusted with the externals which their religion presents; refuse to look for the truth that is overlaid with so much error; and, because required to believe too much, end in believing nothing. There are numbers who

are led to deny the Godhead of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, on account of the ridiculous honours paid to the virgin Mary.

We must now trace the long and troubled course of events by which that reformation was prevented from being established in France, and pursue our history of Protestantism unconnected with the diversified events and characters of the German reformation.

The name of Francis I. is usually associated with ideas of all that is brilliant and dazzling. He possessed all the qualities which constituted what, in the language of his age, was called a chevalier. He was handsome, brave, generous, sensitive of honour, and desirous of glory. He possessed also that love of learning and of the fine arts which was becoming general in his time. His court—the gayest, the most brilliant and dissipated, perhaps, in the world—welcomed the men of letters, the great painters, and sculptors, which the age produced. Among the former were some who, it was said, were “inclining to Lutheranism;” and some who, in the universities of Paris, had learned or taught the truths of the gospel.

Francis, in the early part of his reign, saw only learned men in the professors of different religious opinions, and received and listened to them as such. The learned, but timid Erasmus, was invited to his court, and says that the king, by drawing thither the learned men who were inclining to Lutheranism, expected to adorn and distinguish his reign more magni-

ficiently than he could have done by trophies, pyramids, or most gorgeous buildings.

Many opposite characters were to be seen both in the court and family of Francis I. His admired and talented sister, the celebrated Margaret, was unlike her dissipated mother, Louisa of Savoy. Francis and Margaret present, in their younger days, the interesting portrait of an attached brother and sister, possessing the same intellectual tastes, the same personal attractions, and much the same natural dispositions. It was in her court when duchess of Alençon, that Anne Boleyn, who became one of her ladies, is supposed to have acquired, as it is said, "a taste for the reformed opinions," which she manifested at the court of Henry VIII. when, unhappily, she became maid of honour to the ill-treated queen Catharine.

The bishop of Meaux, who was the great friend, adviser, and correspondent of the princess Margaret, became a convert to Lefèvre's preaching, but not a separatist from the church of Rome. He erroneously believed that a faithful adherence to the doctrines and commands of the gospel was compatible with obedience to papal authority; but the sequel will show he was forced to choose between them.

Berquin, an officer of the king's household, was, in the fullest sense of the word, a Protestant, and, as such, was burned in Paris. Lefèvre, with the bishop of Meaux, and the reformer Farel, often conversed with Margaret,

the king's sister; and she became, there is every reason to believe, a sincere Christian, and a true friend to "the new opinions," as they were called, though they were as old as the gospel itself. She did what she could, in later days, to shelter the persecuted Protestants, and, in her fine old castle of Pau, a tower is yet shown, where, when queen of Navarre, she concealed the famous reformer Calvin.

The characters of persons who are attached to a party are sure to come down to posterity in portraits drawn by different hands. Thus, that of Margaret of Valois, who, by a second marriage, became queen of Navarre; when represented by the friends of the reformation, is quite unlike what it is when described by its adversaries.

The former say that, from the age of fifteen, "the Spirit of God began to be manifested in her, and to appear in all her actions;" while an opponent asserts that Margaret had "scarcely any religion, and patronised those whose religious views were most libertine and convenient, and who yet spoke uncharitably of the ignorance and ill-lives of the clergy."

Margaret was an authoress; some of the tales she wrote have been considered unsuited to the delicacy of a female pen, and some of her advocates deny that she was their author. Her subject was, the scandals of monastic life at that day; her wit was lavished on the ignorance, superstitions, follies, and vices that abounded among the professed religious orders.

The court of Francis used to make progresses, as it was termed, in the fashion of our queen Elizabeth, journeying through the kingdom with great pomp and pageantry; feasting at the nobles' castles, thus levying heavy contributions from them, and indulging in an excess of pleasures. When Margaret accompanied her brother on these occasions, a lively French author affirms that the princess wrote these tales in her litter as she travelled, and that his own grandmother was her attendant, and used to hold her writing-stand.

She wrote, however, some deeply spiritual poems. One collection of hers is called "Pearls of the Pearl of Princesses;" and another, "The Mirror of the Sinful Soul." Many will deem some of her writings interesting as an example of what has been called the religious novel.

These literary tastes naturally led both Margaret and her royal brother among the reformed party of Paris. But this intercourse appears to have been blessed by God to the spiritual good of the sister only; Margaret became the protector, and Francis the persecutor, of the French Protestants.

It was not, however, until their principles came too openly into collision with his that persecution commenced. For some time, Francis rather favoured than opposed them. He attended the discourses at the university, which was then resorted to by students from Germany, England, and other parts, who carried

thither the writings of Luther and other controversialists. He listened with pleasure to the freedom of intellectual conversation in his own palace, and called the learned persons he patronised his sons. But the principal step he took for the advancement, especially of biblical learning, was to found two professorships for Greek and Hebrew, at Paris. The learned Beza, for this act, places the portrait of Francis I. among those of the reformers, and says the place is due to him who, though a persecutor, was instrumental in that reform, by "banishing barbarism from the world."

A well-known anecdote relates, that, not long before this time, a monk, in preaching, exhorted his hearers to be careful of a newly-invented language, called Greek, and assured them that whoever learned Hebrew instantly became a Jew.

It seemed probable that Francis, at one time, especially under the influence of his sister, would have become the patron of learned and pious men among the reformed, and thus the Protestant religion might have been established in the kingdom. But it is also probable that the strictness of morals and manners then inculcated by the Protestants would have been a great obstacle to this dissipated king; and the grace of God must certainly have changed his heart, and reformed his life before he could, in sincerity, join with those who desired to take the doctrines and precepts of the gospel for a guide to their steps. But while such a change

as cannot be wrought by the will of man, might never have been effected in him, Francis might have aided the new-born church, simply from liberal feeling, and a desire to promote learning and intellect, were it not for some circumstances which seem to have exercised an adverse influence over his conduct in regard to his Protestant subjects.

The historian, Brantome, tells us that king Francis had some cause of complaint against the pope, and told his ambassador that, if his master did not change his conduct, he would act by the Protestants of his kingdom as Henry VIII. was doing in England. "Sire," replied the pope's ambassador, "you would then be the greatest sufferer; a new religion requires a new prince."

Francis meditated on the remark; his acute understanding perceived its force; and the historian adds that he embraced the ambassador, and loved him better for his advice. The king of France was an absolute sovereign, and wished to remain so. The reformation produced not only a religious, but a political revolution. Civil bondage is incompatible with religious freedom; religious bondage is friendly to political despotism.

The sovereigns of Europe who most opposed the reformation, did so chiefly on political grounds. Charles V. contended with the Protestants for their civil, still more than for their religious liberties. Such was the general cause of Protestant persecution when conducted by

governments, and not merely instigated by priestly bigotry.

Francis might have been rather confirmed in the fear thus implanted by the papal ambassador, from the commotion excited in Paris when he ratified with the pope his famous concordat, or alliance. It was thought so great an infringement on the liberties of the Gallican church, that the students of the universities not only went in procession to church to supplicate the protection of God for their country, but marched through the streets in armour, to show a readiness to protect it themselves; attacking, or threatening, even persons of rank who were executing the king's order.

To ratify this concordat, Francis appeared in the cathedral of Bologna, holding up the train of the pope: a singular position for a gay knight and gallant warrior! The Protestants for some time received, at least, the tacit protection of their sovereign. The opposition quickly raised against the preachers of the gospel by the priests and doctors of the Catholic theology met with no encouragement from him. The indignation which is always produced when light first encounters darkness was kindled at Paris.

The good old Lefèvre was convicted of the strange heresy of saying that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, and the woman who washed our Lord's feet with her tears, were three distinct women. An opinion that now is generally received, kindled then a vigorous con-



troversy. It reached even to England, and Fisher, bishop of Rochester, wrote against Lefèvre, who might have been burned for this imputed heresy concerning the three women, had not the king—probably smiling at the subject of persecution as well as at the persecutors—rescued the pious doctor from impending danger. Francis, at this time, if inclined to toleration, was full of indifference ; he was a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God ; a friend to learning rather than a protector of religion. In the midst of one of his gay progresses through his dominions, a party of angry doctors from Paris waited upon him, to complain of the heresy that now prevailed in the universities. Francis paused in his pleasures to listen to them, and replied :—

“ I am not willing that these men should be disturbed ; to persecute those who teach would be to prevent men of letters from coming into our kingdom.”

Margaret had even nearly prevailed on him to invite the mild and excellent reformer, Melancthon, to his court, but the pernicious influence of cardinal Tournon, his chief adviser, prevented this step.

Though the king would not sanction the clamour of the doctors, Beda, the most violent of the opposers, continued all the species of persecution that was in his power ; and though Lefèvre could not be burned, he was obliged to seek a calmer asylum than the university then afforded to him. Lefèvre left Paris,

and he was gladly received by the bishop of Meaux.

At Meaux, the gospel was preached for some time in peace; and from thence it was sent into the country around. Farel, also, came to join the church so happily flourishing at Meaux. A great work was accomplished there.

Lefèvre, anxious that the French should be able to read the Bible, published a translation, from the Latin, of the New Testament and the Psalms, nearly at the same time that Luther sent forth his translation in Germany. In both countries, the effect in diffusing the doctrines of the reformation was great.

Many a pious, but enslaved mind, had before then desired anxiously to obtain spiritual light and peace. When they could read the gospel in their own tongue, or hear it read, they learned that salvation is not of works but of grace, that men are justified freely through faith in Christ Jesus; and thus many found joy and peace in believing. The bishop of Meaux sent the princess Margaret a copy of the gospels, beautifully illuminated, after the ancient fashion, praying her to present it to the king her brother. "Such a present," he wrote to her, "coming from your hand, cannot but be agreeable. . . . The Scriptures are a royal dish, nourishing without corrupting, and healing all diseases; the more we taste of it, the more we hunger for it, with uncloying and insatiable appetite." At that moment, all eyes

appeared opened to the long-hidden treasures of the Bible: so great was the curiosity excited, that even Margaret's ungodly mother had portions translated for her.

Both Francis and his mother had thus the means of knowing the will of God; but their lives were not conformable to it, and it may be believed that, while the newly translated Bible might be regarded as a literary curiosity, it was not perused with diligence and sincerity. Had that king embraced the reformed faith, and favoured the Protestant religion in his kingdom, the history of France would probably have been different from what it has been: the moral power that France would have gained, together with her other advantages, would indeed have set her on high amongst the nations.

The good old doctor Lefèvre rejoiced beforehand, in the hope that such would be the case. A monk who heard his expressions of joy at what was occurring, and of hope for what he believed must take place, answered with indignation, that if such a change were likely to occur, his brethren would preach a crusade; and if the king permitted such proceedings, as Lefèvre spoke of, they would drive him from his kingdom. At Meaux, which had been the centre of light and truth to France, the peace was broken. The monks raised a clamour against the preachers of the gospel, and appealed to the bishop against his own friends. The bishop, for that time firm, though he after-

wards failed, preached against the monks from his pulpit. They carried their complaints to Paris, and denounced both the bishop and teachers of Meaux to the parliament.

The indiscreet zeal of a working man, named Leclerc, made the matter worse. Having been very useful in diffusing a knowledge of the truth, he was cruelly punished, and afterwards left the scene of his useful labours, finally retiring to Metz, another city where the gospel was gaining ground. Here he again provoked the persecutors' rage, and unhappily injured the cause he wished to serve, by going into a church, and breaking the images of saints. For this offence he was barbarously burned to death as a heretic, and died faithfully as a martyr.

We may regret that the zeal of the reformer should hurry the Christian beyond the meekness and gentleness of Christ; we may remember that Paul did not demolish the altar which was dedicated "to the unknown God,"—and call to mind his words to the pagans—"Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious;" but in the constancy of the martyr we have proof of his sincerity, and must deplore the fierceness of spirit which would count the demolition of a statue worth the sacrifice of a life. The fate of Leclerc has been frequently mentioned, as he was the first martyr of the reformation in France.

Finally, both Lefèvre and Farel were obliged to leave Meaux; the bishop, unhappily, failed in the hour of trial, and retreated from the

storm of persecution to the shelter of Rome ; retracting the opinions which his church called heretical, and deserting the friends from whom he had received them. The congregation of Meaux was dispersed. The candlestick was taken out of its place, and the light that had shone from thence was carried to other lands.

The gallant Francis was defeated, and taken prisoner by the emperor of Germany, Charles v., at the famous battle of Pavia. He wrote to his mother : " Madam, all is lost, except our honour." During his tedious captivity, that queen possessed increased power against the Protestants of France. Desirous to conciliate the pope on behalf of the captive king, she wrote to ask his counsel with regard to the numerous heretics that infested the kingdom. The pope at once appointed an inquisition, or court of inquiry, and commanded that all persons who were declared by the bishops and judges guilty of heresy, should be delivered over to the secular power ; that is, sentenced to be burned to death.

Thus, then, commenced that dreadful persecution, which continued for such a length of time to deluge France with the blood of its own people. It is not our purpose to tell of the many heroic persons who now offered up their lives at the stake, refusing to purchase them back by a recantation of their faith.

The history of a poor hermit, who had heard the gospel from the preachers at Meaux, is remarkable. It was affirmed that, under pre-

tence of asking charity, he diffused the doctrines he himself believed. His quiet labours among his poor brethren were not overlooked; he was only known as the hermit of Livry, and was dragged from his lonely dwelling in the forest of that name, and burned before the cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris, meekly saying his only hope was in the pardoning mercy of God, and his sole desire to die in the faith of Christ. His name was not recorded in history, but—far greater honour!—it was “written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

We are also told of a female martyr, a lady whose life had been spent in charitable works. As she went to the flames, the poor cried aloud, that she never more would bestow her charity upon them. “Yet once more!” this heroic woman replied, and gave her shoes to a poor creature who had none.

In relating the sufferings of the French Protestants, it is not well to conceal, or deny, any cause they may have given for ill-will against them. Such was that improper step which Beza calls “a very imprudent measure;” namely, posting a placard on the palace-gates against the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, the doctrine held most sacred by that church, so that any one who assails it is deemed guilty of blasphemy. Such an act could only produce anger, without promoting conviction of error. Cardinal Tournon, it is said, was “put by it into such a fury, that he would have exterminated all the Protestants if he had

had the power." The power which he had, however, he unsparingly used ; and as he was the king's first counsellor, it is not unfair to say, that to him must attach the chief responsibility of such deeds as were committed with a view to avenge this insult, not as shown to the king only, but, as the priests said, to the Almighty God, whose real body they erroneously affirm to be present in the sacrament.

It is from this time that we must view Francis I., now returned to Paris, in the dark character of a religious persecutor. Volatile and changeable as his disposition was, at one time inspiring the hopes, at another, inciting the fears, of his Protestant subjects, we should be utterly at a loss to account for the change in his conduct, and the barbarity of his actions, did we not know that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Contempt and disgust excited against the doctrines of the gospel assume the form of hatred against their professors. To this—to the indomitable pride of will, which would allow, even in the consciences of others, of no opposers to the fierceness of the age, and the cruel spirit of bigotry in his advisers, working on that pride which would not willingly grant his lowly subjects the right of thinking or acting otherwise than as he wished them, must be imputed the ferocity that marked his proceedings, and caused the gay and polished monarch of France almost to rival the Neros and Domitians of ancient Rome.

While the king and his whole court passed in procession to church, to make atonement for the insult offered to the holy sacrament, Francis, bare-headed, carrying a lighted taper in his hand, and the priest bearing the host, altars were erected in the streets, and before each altar—most horrible to write the words—Christians, called heretics, were seen burning in the flames, with circumstances of singularly invented cruelty, which it would be exceedingly painful, and unnecessary to transcribe. The king, handing his taper to the cardinal Tournon, knelt down and asked the blessing of Heaven on himself and his nation, while witnessing this fearful sacrifice to bigotry. It would be curious to trace, if we knew it, the process by which such a mind was conducted to this state.

At a splendid entertainment afterwards given, Francis declared that the most vigorous punishments should be inflicted on all who persisted in opposing either the will of the church, or his own will: and he called on all faithful men to denounce their nearest friends or relatives who were guilty of "such blasphemies," saying that "if his own children fell into such enormities, he would yield them up as the first sacrifice to God." On such an occasion, it was represented to him that heresy had already entered his own family in the person of his sister, Margaret. But Francis might find it more easy to promise sacrifices to his religion than actually to make them. He replied to the hint concerning his



sister: "Speak no more on that point; my sister loves me too well to think otherwise than as I do."

The queen of Navarre had made Gerard Rousel (a Calvinist,) bishop of Oléron, in the Pyrenees. He was preaching in a lay dress, when some indignant adherent to the church of Rome came behind him, and, with the blow of a hatchet, aimed probably at the narrow pedestal which supported the pulpit, knocked it down, and the bishop with it. The fall inflicted such an injury, that he died in consequence.

Cardinal Tournon, a statesman and politician, is chargeable as the great persecutor of this reign. It is singular that the eminent reformer, Calvin, was, in some degree, the means of increasing the persecution of Protestantism. That reformer had fled from Paris and taken refuge in various parts of France. Finally, leaving it altogether, he settled more tranquilly at Geneva, where Farel also had gone; and there, in security, he wrote his "Christian Institutes," a work which he dedicated to his lawful sovereign, the king of France, praying him, at the same time, to have pity on his Protestant subjects. This work is said by a Roman Catholic writer to have been "the great support of heresy, as it systematized its doctrines," and tended to make congregations keep together, even under the loss of ministers. The dedication of such a work to one who bore the title of "Most Christian Majesty," was said by the cardinal to

be an insult, to show a contempt of his power, and of the religion he was appointed to uphold. The king's dislike to the Protestant religion was greatly increased by Calvin's work. The Protestants began to be called by the name of that reformer; but, in general, the singular name by which Protestantism in France was distinguished was that of "The Religion;" an emphatic appellation.

The utmost rigour was enforced against Protestants. The Bible had been circulated in the language of the country—the common, or vulgar tongue, as we express it. But now the priests made it a sin to pray in French; and a decree, prohibiting men to pray in their own tongue wherein they were born, was forthwith issued. It is well that of human beings, as well as of the stars of heaven, it may be said, "There is no speech nor language; without these their voice is heard," (Psa. xix. 3, margin.) God hears the prayer of the heart, if it be right in his sight, and the mere language of the lips is of little avail.

Tournon became the great inquisitor of France, in fact, though not in name. Secrecy became impossible, escape hopeless; the most cautious were discovered; the most daring were punished. Still, even at the stake, the gospel was preached, and the dying, amid flames, imparted new life to the living. The addresses of martyrs wrought many conversions. Their words came to the hearts of the hearers, accompanied by the force which sincerity

bestows, and, in some instances, were attended by the power of the Holy Spirit: the persecutors found that, when a martyr died, one more heretic, at least, was usually made. The sufferers were, in consequence, not allowed to speak, and the tongue of the bold Berquin was pierced before he suffered. The light of truth had, however, gone further than Paris; and the keen eye of inquisitorial bigotry unhappily followed it.

We have before spoken of the Protestant inhabitants of Merindol and Cabrières, the descendants of an interesting race; the settlements, most probably, of the ancient Albigenses, who appealed to Louis XII. as their sovereign, and who, whatever race they descended from, were in faith identical with the Vaudois of Piedmont, though inhabiting another territory. It has been before said, too, that these existing Protestants had affinity with the Protestants of a later age, those which the sixteenth century produced. Their subsequent and too brief history is recorded by a French abbé, an ecclesiastic of the Roman Catholic church; as such, we need not imagine that its details are overcharged.

The dwellers in the mountains of Dauphiné and Provence had made some converts; their zeal had probably been re-animated by what was going on in other parts. They were accused of innovation in the established religion, though it might seem that lives of hard-working and unwearied industry, such as they led, could

leave but little time for proselyting, however inclined they might be to convert their neighbours.

In the year 1545, permission was granted to the parliament of Aix to take active proceedings against these people, as heretics. "Everything was dreadful in the decree," says a French historian; "and everything was dreadful in its execution." Twenty-two towns or villages of these ill-fated districts were burned. The persons who escaped in the darkness of the night when the attack was made, were pursued to the rocks whither they fled, and barbarously slaughtered; old men, women, and children, all alike were murdered. At Cabrières, which was the chief town destroyed, seven hundred persons were killed; the women were shut up in a barn where straw was laid up, and all were burned together. The houses were pulled down; the whole district ravaged; and where industry had caused a garden to flourish, a waste wilderness was seen. A Jesuit, writing of this dreadful affair, says that above three thousand persons were killed, and above nine hundred houses destroyed.

Francis I. is said to have made inquiry, before he permitted this massacre, concerning the morals and doctrines of these Protestants, and to have heard that they were an unoffending and pious people, who, however, strenuously refused obedience to what they termed the superstitions of Rome. Perhaps their appeal to the predecessor of Francis, Louis XII., might

have given rise to this statement. We would willingly believe that this monarch was not guilty of such a deed, having such knowledge. Nevertheless, a Roman Catholic historian asserts that the space of three months was accorded to these innocent and unoffending people, "to amend their lives and doctrines," and, at the end of that time, recourse was had to fire and sword—thus exterminating what could not be amended.

The fugitives from these massacres wandered in rocks and forests, "destitute, afflicted, tormented." Some were taken, and others were killed; a number were sent to work in the galleys. An order was issued that no one should afford them food or shelter. Thus, some died of hunger; some, from eating the grass and herbs of the field, perished in sickness. In one way or another, the work was accomplished.

The approach of death—that grand remembrancer of the course of life—brought to the memory of Francis the unmerited sufferings of these people. He repented of having lent himself to that fell work, and, on his dying bed, charged his son to inquire into and punish the conduct of those who, he said, had exceeded his orders.

It would be beyond our scope to enter into an examination of this monarch's character, or to detail the varied and most interesting events of his reign. Foreign policy and priestly bigotry were alternately or unitedly the moving springs of his actions. We can only lament

that such natural endowments as he possessed were misapplied, and regret that this commencement of the reformation in France met with an enemy in one who might have proved an eminent friend. But we learn from the early history of Christianity, that the religion which is patronised from mere reasons of state, seldom remains pure; and we learn from still higher authority, that the King of kings holdeth in his Almighty hand the hearts of the children of men. In his sight, the great Francis I. was one of "the children of men," and, had it pleased His all-seeing wisdom, he would have put his bridle in his lips, and turned him back in the proud and cruel course he pursued against the Lord's people.

## CHAPTER IV.

HENRY II. 1547—1559.

FRANCIS I. was succeeded by his son Henry. His court was divided into parties; but we need only pursue the history of two of these parties, namely, that of the Guises, and that of the queen, the too famous Catharine de' Medici. These are intimately connected with the troubled story of Protestantism in France.

On the accession of Henry II., the Protestants greatly increased. The existence of the rival parties, and the consequent occupation of the court, drew attention from them. Nobles and princes, to further their own interests, or strengthen their cause, began to conciliate them, but many persons of rank joined them from unworldly motives. Appearances, however, soon became adverse to the Protestants.

Catharine de' Medici acted but a minor part during the reign of her husband; she had a rival in the court, whose influence with the king was much greater than that of his domineering queen. This lady, the beautiful Diana of Poitiers, had her own party; she is said to have been a good Catholic, and a sincere

hater of "the religion." The duke of Guise, and the cardinal of Lorraine, his brother, formed the most powerful party; ambition and love of power actuated both, but the defence of the Catholic and established church was their ostensible motive.

We shudder at the name of Catharine de' Medici, but it is only in the reign of her sons that that terrible woman's character becomes developed. Among all those court parties, the Protestants were not long left in doubt of their sovereign's conduct. The new reign was ushered in with rejoicings, but to these people the words of our Lord were verified: "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice."

It is painful in these milder times even to glance over the horrible transactions of the past. We would fain believe that the world could no longer tolerate the hideous spectacle once exhibited upon it. Yet the spirit of bigotry is not extinct; and if history will inform us that the Protestants and reformers were guilty of some violence, it should not conceal or mitigate the barbarism and provocations of their adversaries.

Such is the reason for quoting the following extract from the French author, Mezerai. We shall not often repeat the description of such occurrences. It describes the scene which Paris presented on the entry of king Henry and his wife, Catharine de' Medici, after their coronation at St. Denis, A.D. 1549:—



“The court passed almost all this year in joy and carousals. The king and queen made a splendid entry into Paris. . . . When the court was weary of these gay diversions, the scene changed, and piety succeeded to gallantry. A procession was made to the cathedral of Notre Dame, in which the king joined, in order to manifest, by this public act, his zeal to maintain the religion of his ancestors, confirming this evidence of his intentions by the frightful punishment of multitudes of miserable Protestants, who were burned on the Place de Grève. They were fastened to beams with an iron chain and pulley, successively raised and plunged again into an enormous fire. The king chose to feast his eyes with this tragic sight; but it is said that the cries of one of his own domestics, whom they tormented in this manner, so struck his imagination, that, all his life after, he was troubled by the recollection, which made him shudder and turn pale, as often as the image recurred.” “It is certain,” adds the historian, “that the people, seeing the constancy of the victims on the one hand, and the dissoluteness of the court on the other, called this justice a persecution, and this punishment a martyrdom.”

Political reasons, and a war with the great rival of Francis, the emperor Charles v., were the causes of suspending this persecution. Through the influence of the Guises, the foremost foes of Protestantism, Henry was induced to aid the Protestants of Germany in their

struggle against Charles. Such is the little weight that religion in general is found to have in reasons of state or of policy. A great relief to the suffering people was also accorded by an edict published at that time, which removed the charge of investigating their offences from the ecclesiastical to the secular courts.

Pope Julius III., who had made a cardinal of a boy that took care of a pet monkey, died in the year 1555. His successor followed him in a few days after his elevation. The memorable opponent of Martin Luther, Charles v., opposed the election of Paul IV., who, being notwithstanding chosen, declared that antagonist of Protestantism an enemy to the church, and promised to divide his conquests in Italy with whoever aided him in driving Charles from that country. The king of France was to have had his share; but, to the surprise of the world, the emperor and warrior, Charles v., suddenly resigned his crown, gave up his wealth, and retired to end his days as a monk in a Spanish monastery.

After the publication of Calvin's work before mentioned, the Protestant church in France almost entirely followed the model he proposed, the same which the Protestant church of Geneva, and much the same which that of Scotland, adopted. The season of peace now afforded to them, after thirty years of continued persecution, might allow an opportunity for organizing the constitution and outward

forms of their religious societies and services. While under the secular authority and protection, and while the attention of the state was directed to foreign affairs, Calvinism (for the French Protestants are as generally named Calvinists, from the reformer Calvin, who was a native of their country, as the German Protestants are named Lutherans) gained ground still more. At Lyons, it prevailed to a great extent. That city has, from the earliest ages of Christianity, been remarkable in the history of the church; and its vicinity to Geneva, the head-quarters, as it might be called, of the reformers, rendered it likely to maintain its place in that of the reformation.

The first Calvinist church was now opened for Divine worship at Paris, and, instead of meeting privately to read the Scriptures, pray, and sing psalms, the Protestants openly assembled for the worship of God.

This state of things, however, was only allowed to last so long as the attention of statesmen and politicians was engrossed by other affairs. The bigotry of neither the clergy nor people could directly assail them without the aid of the law. The indignation of Rome at this toleration of heretics was soon aroused, and the cardinal of Lorraine found means to do away with all the indulgence which the edict before alluded to had afforded to the Protestants. The church could once more boast of pursuing vigorous measures for the suppression of heresy in France. Cardinal Tournon,

whom the parties at court had displeased, returned from Rome to superintend his diocese of Lyons, of which place he was archbishop. A Protestant church had also been erected there, and the cardinal found that a meeting, or synod, of the Protestant ministers was to be held in the city.

Five of these were immediately seized, and quickly sentenced to the punishment of heretics, burning alive: a singular sentence for the correction of religious error, if such were supposed to exist, and one which unhappily the clergy of Rome, who forgot that the weapons Paul used were not carnal, but spiritual, could plead for on the example of Calvin, who, they argued, condemned to a similar fate the heretic Servetus. So quickly will the error of God's servants be made use of by those who, as the prophet says, watch for their halting, Jer. xx. 10.

It is singular that the designation which Protestants are in the habit of giving to papal Rome, was at this time applied by Romanists to the alleged Protestant heresy of Geneva. "The cares of the archbishop," says cardinal Fleury, "were not fruitless; Lyons preserved its faith, in the midst of contagion, and in the vicinity of Babylon."

To assist the archbishop's efforts, not in his own diocese only, but throughout France, the most detestable aid was called in; that of the inquisition. The genius of France was not as friendly to that terrible institution as that of

some other lands ; it never obtained a firm footing there, and was of another character from what is known as the Spanish inquisition. The inquisitor of the faith in France was, however, armed with powers to terrify all who dared to believe less or more than the church of Rome prescribed.

A monk of the order of St. Dominic, the founder of the inquisition at the time of the Albigenses, was appointed to summon, by command of the pope, all accused heretics before his tribunal, to question and to condemn. A secret police was established, and employed in his service ; and thus the most private affairs of families were made known to the inquisitor.

By such means the expression of religious opinions, or sentiments, is most effectually prevented, as all becomes known, and, almost literally, it may be said, that what is spoken in the ear in closets is proclaimed on the house-tops. Distrust of every one is felt under the consciousness of such an all-prevailing power. The authority thus placed in the hands of a Dominican monk, by the head of their church, was not pleasing to the French clergy ; but the court approved of the papal proceedings, and the parliament was required by the king to sanction them.

That parliament which had shown a spirit of justice towards their oppressed fellow-subjects, used all their influence to prevent the establishment of these inquisitorial proceedings.

A spirited remonstrance was prepared, and delivered by the president before the king in council. "We abhor," said the bold orator, "the establishment of a tribunal of blood, where secret accusation takes the place of proof; where no forms of justice are observed, and where the accused are denied all means of defence.

"Begin, sire, by procuring for the nation an edict (or law) which will not cover your kingdom with funeral piles; which will not be wetted either with the tears or blood of your subjects. At a distance from your presence, bowed down by the pressure of labour, or occupied in their arts and trades, they are ignorant of the proceedings now contemplated against them; sire, it is for them, and in their name, the court presents to you its humble remonstrance, and its fervent supplications. . . . . As for you, sirs," addressing the councillors of state, "you, who so quietly hear me, and possibly think you can have no interest in this question, it is fit you should be apprised of your mistake. So long as you enjoy royal and public favour, honours are heaped upon you; every one appears to respect you; no one thinks of assailing you. But the higher your elevation, the nearer you are to the thunderbolt; and we should be strangers to history if we did not know the usual results of a disgrace. . . . But should such a misfortune befall you, you would still retain your personal properties, and retire to private life, consoled

by the hope of transmitting them to your children. If this edict passes, your condition will no longer be the same. You may, as has already been the case, have men to succeed you in office who are poor and rapacious; and who, not knowing how long they may retain their posts, will be glad to make use of your loss of favour to enrich themselves at your expense. They will then find it easy to do so. It will only be necessary to make sure of an inquisitor and two witnesses on their side, and, though you may be saints, you will be burned as heretics."

The effect of this bold speech—from which a few passages are here abridged—on Henry II. and his council, appears to have been very much the same as was produced on Felix the Roman, by the often-quoted reasoning of Paul; the councillors were impressed by it, and the passing of the edict was deferred to a more convenient season. Unhappily, that season was soon made convenient to those who waited for its coming.

Notwithstanding the strongest prohibitions, the writings of the reformers of Germany found their way into France, and even into the French army. In the German war, the latter was brought into closer contact with Protestants, and some officers of rank are said to have thus received "their first taste for the new religion."

The religion, called "new," was, however, as old as the gospel of Christ; it only

awoke from a long sleep at the reformation.

The Protestant party still increased in France; and as, in the days of early Christianity, there were saints in Cæsar's household, so in the court, camp, and council of Henry II. were numbers of that very sect to be found against which his zeal, or animosity, was constantly excited. In the court of queen Catharine, the first ladies were of the reformed faith. The very difficulty and hazard of attending Protestant worship caused it to be more frequented by the nobility of the court. A religion that allowed of inquiry, that demanded the free exercise of the mind, employed its energies, and appealed to common understanding, was much more suited to the character of the French people, than one which allowed of no deviations from the decrees and interpretations of the church; which required passive mental obedience, and forbade even the reading of the Bible, lest an intelligent person should understand it erroneously.

Alas! have not subsequent times fully justified this remark, and shown the futility of thus attempting to shackle the human mind? Bursting the bands of a superstitious obedience, the people of France rushed into a frightful infidelity, and renounced, in their country, both religion and the church.

Every considerable religious movement has generally political adherents. It will be well to bear in mind that this was the case with



Protestantism in France, in a period subsequent to the one we now speak of. In the succeeding reigns, we shall see the Protestants made use of as a political party, and their history, consequently, rendered different from what it would probably have been as merely a religious one.

A mere love of freedom also, led many to join the ranks of Protestantism; and, instead of a scanty and faithful band of the hidden children of God, the French Protestants were seen rising into a powerful and opposing body in the state. The history of their conflict is long.

A circumstance occurred at Paris which created a great sensation in Protestant Germany as well as at the Vatican. Above four hundred people met in a private house to celebrate the Lord's supper; the house was assailed by the mob, and the persons in the neighbourhood put lights in their windows, in order that the poor creatures who endeavoured to escape might be seen, and murdered. A number were killed; a magistrate, with a party of soldiers, interfered, and took the rest prisoners; thus saving them from instant destruction. The pope, hearing the tidings, demanded that they should be burned, and the German princes petitioned for their release. The king wanted soldiers, and so he only delivered five of these people to the flames.

A fresh misfortune to the Protestant cause occurred through the national triumphs of the

duke of Guise. The most gratifying, if not the most important of these, was the retaking of Calais from the English, after it had been in their possession, as the sole remnant of their extensive conquests in France, for the space of two hundred years; a loss to England which caused the well-known saying of our queen Mary, that, at her death, the name of Calais would be found written on her heart.

The Protestants of France had, however, more cause than the queen of England to deplore the triumphs of the duke of Guise. The public favour bestowed on him gave new power to that ambitious family, and to the Roman Catholic party, of which he, and the cardinal of Lorraine, his brother, were the head and leaders. The edict for the establishment of the inquisition was easily procured by the influence of the latter. The resistance of the parliament now only went so far as to control the power of the inquisitors, by allowing the accused, if laymen, the right of appealing from the sentence of the ecclesiastical court. The presidents of this tribunal were three in number, the cardinal of Lorraine, the cardinal of Bourbon, and the cardinal of Chatillon. We shall see the last acting a very different part in the history of his country.

An occasion was not long wanting to employ the energies of this court for the suppression of heresy. The principles of the reformation in France began, as we have seen, in the university of Paris. The "new opinions," as

they were called, had been first promulgated by men of intelligence and learning; they were received and perpetuated by men of similar minds; the students from Germany and England tended to continue the work which Lefèvre and Farel had begun. The spirit of freedom, kindled among the students, did not always confine itself to religious discussions, and quarrels with the monks of an adjoining abbey were the result.

A pleasant promenade, called in French, *Le Pré aux Clercs*, or, in English, the Clerks' Meadow, was the favourite resort both of monks and students: but the disputations which took place there were no longer confined to theology; the students and monks fought, not for a dogma or a doctrine, but for the sole possession of the Clerks' Meadow. The monks were finally beaten; but blood had been shed in the contest. The students held possession of their conquest, and their discussions were freely carried on there. The Clerks' Meadow became the great resort of the Protestants of Paris, where their meetings were held in the open air. They assembled there in crowds, as the French people are still in the habit of doing in the public promenades. The practice of singing psalms here in the evening gave additional celebrity to this quiet spot. It was frequented by persons of the highest rank; the most noted of these were the king and queen of Navarre; the latter not the literary and pious sister of Francis I., but her daughter, who now filled her

place, the truly Protestant Jeanne d'Albret, who, with her husband, will soon appear more prominently in the eventful story of Protestantism in France.

In these, perhaps, their happiest days, they took great pleasure in listening to the sacred music in which hundreds of voices united. The Psalms had been lately translated into French verse, by a poet of the court, whose muse, in general, was devoted to dissimilar subjects. They were set to music, and had become, from their novelty, so singularly fashionable, that the king is said to have gone out hunting, singing the beautiful forty-second psalm, beginning in our version :

“ As pants the hart for cooling streams,  
When heated in the chase,  
So longs my soul, O God, for thee,  
And thy refreshing grace.”

And even Catharine de' Medici, when her proud spirit was kept down by a haughty rival, took pleasure in listening, in her own court, to those sweetly plaintive strains of Israel. The Protestants, however, it is to be hoped, viewed these psalms in a different light, and sang them with a different spirit; and probably this was the cause of their going out of fashion with the dissipated people of the court, who would have nothing to do with these psalms when they became a part of the Calvinistic worship. As such, indeed, they were afterwards prohibited as heretical, and were only to be heard in the pleasant retreat of the Clerks' Meadow. The

spectacles and dances, so much frequented in the gay capital, were forsaken by numbers who frequented in preference this place of Protestant assembly; and it is affirmed that one night upwards of a thousand persons followed the king and queen of Navarre to their house, singing these sweet psalms; to which, though prohibited by the Roman church, many who were not of the Protestant faith listened with pleasure. That faith, indeed, was found, more or less, to pervade every class, the court and the army, the parliament, and even the Roman church.

The evening assemblies in the Clerks' Meadow were pronounced by the ecclesiastical tribunal to be unlawful and seditious. The parliament declined to interfere; and the refusal confirmed the cardinal of Lorraine in his belief that the taint of heresy infected that body. He devised a deceitful means of finding out if such were the case, and prepared his royal master, if so, to root it out. He urged Henry to hold a council, in order, apparently, to consult on the best measures to pursue with his heretical subjects, and to cause some plan to be submitted to the council which should draw forth the real opinions of its members. The advice said to have been given to the king on this occasion, as it is recorded by a contemporary historian, scarcely bears the stamp of truth; we would willingly believe it is too horrible to be given by even the cardinal of Lorraine. It is enough to say that the king went to his parliament with-

out giving any notice of his intentions, and resolved to find out what heretical members it contained. His entrance caused great surprise, and at first created alarm; but, dissembling his sentiments as he had been advised to do, he descended from his kingly dignity to employ the meanest deceit; assured his parliament that he felt no ill-will to any man who had embraced the opinions of "the new religion," but, on the contrary, wished them all to express their opinions freely on the measures proposed to their consideration, or to suggest such as appeared to them more expedient.

With the memory of the open, chivalrous Francis I. still before them, it is not to be wondered at, if some of the councillors really were deceived, and believed the son of that monarch clear of such an artifice in order to ensnare them. Two of them especially, named Dubourg and Faur, spoke their sentiments plainly. The former, alluding to the gross iniquity of the times, said, that while such sinfulness was unreprieved by the clergy, other men were brought to the stake for the crime of praying to God in their own language. And Faur, fixing his eyes on the cardinal of Lorraine, had the boldness to say, "Let us begin by seeking for the real author of these troubles, lest the same answer might be made to some of us as once was made to Ahab, '*It is thou that troublest Israel.*'" One president took an opposite tone, and highly praised the memory of king Philip Augustus, who had burned six

hundred heretics in one day. Henry, however, had found out what he wanted to know; he rose up in a terrible passion, cast a significant look to the two obnoxious councillors, and made a sign to the captain of his Scotch guards, count Montgomery, who was afterwards to act so singular a part in the tragedy which our history presents. The king's look explained his wish; Dubourg and Faur were instantly arrested and lodged in prison.

The most violent proceedings were immediately commenced against all who were known to be Protestants. Henry was impatient to see Dubourg at once condemned to death; but, meantime, his anger took a more extended range. He formed the determination of annihilating Protestantism in his kingdom, even by the destruction of all his Protestant subjects. The prisons of Paris were soon full; persecution raged everywhere; spies were paid for informations; and no shelter was afforded to a Protestant head, for whoever concealed the criminal was implicated in the crime. Protestantism, however, was to survive for even greater conflicts.

The conclusion of this part of our history reminds one of the striking narratives of the Old Testament, and the remarkable deliverances of God's people which we read of there.

While the trembling Protestants and the betrayed councillors awaited their death-warrant, feasting and revelling reigned in the palace and in the court: the city of Paris rejoiced.

The marriage of the princess Elizabeth, the unhappy daughter of Henry II., was to seal the peace with Spain, and to be celebrated at Paris with all pomp and splendour. The terrible Alva, the adversary of the Protestant Netherlanders, was to convey the princess to her dark-minded and bigoted husband, Philip II. The cardinal of Lorraine is said to have advised Henry to do the king of Spain and his general a pleasure by burning some of his heretical councillors to death. Whether the advice were given or not, it is certain that such a spectacle would have been exhibited had not the persecutor been suddenly stopped short in his course. Just one fortnight after the king's treacherous visit to his parliament, and while the obnoxious councillors were momentarily expecting death, he held a gay tournament in honour of his daughter's marriage. The chief nobility, according to a fashion even then rapidly disappearing, displayed on this occasion their skill in arms, by mock encounters, which were sometimes attended with serious results. King Henry himself was one of the combatants, and was, of course, allowed to consider himself the victor in all contests.

Elated with success, and in high spirits from the excitement, he saw he had broken every lance but two of those which were to be engaged in the lists. He called on count Montgomery to take one of these, and, in the language of the olden time, "to do him battle." Montgomery, it is generally admitted, endeavoured to decline



the honour, and refused the trial of skill. The queen is said to have shown great uneasiness at the proposal, and joined her entreaties to Henry to desist from further tilting. Catharine de' Medici pursued the strange, and, it would seem, unholy science, called astrology, which, in the dark ages of the world, was productive of so much evil, by pretending to foretell events, which the very prediction was designed to suggest or accomplish. An astrologer, it is said, had predicted to the king a violent death in single combat. Whether the prediction were ever made or not, it is well known that impressions have at times foreshadowed coming events upon the mind—impressions which are, doubtless, often the warnings of God's providence.

Both the queen and Montgomery would have deterred Henry from his purpose; but, obliging the captain of his guards to take a lance, their horses rushed against each other. The visor of the king's helmet was displaced by the shock, and the lance of his antagonist entered his left eye. Henry fell from his horse, and never spoke again, though he lived for eleven days.

Thus died Henry II., by a stroke, generally believed, at the time, at least, to be accidental, from the hand of the man who, but a few days previously, had been made the instrument of his injustice against his Protestant councillors. Had not his life been thus taken from the earth, it is probable that the Protestant church

in France would have been almost utterly extirpated by him. As it was, that church survived even more disastrous days; more disastrous, not to temporal peace and outward prosperity, but to the growth and cultivation of "the fruits of the Spirit," which had adorned it, but which, in the license and misery of civil war, in the rage of faction, and the violence of recriminating vengeance, retire from observation, and only exist hidden among those who are kept from the evil that is in the world.

In the reign of Henry II. the lives of the Protestants appeared in strong contrast with those of their adversaries. They numbered among them the most intellectual and thinking people, the most refined minds of a gross and ignorant age, the most decent, orderly, and virtuous of the community. The historian, Mezerai, gives another picture of the morals of their adversaries. "Almost every vice which tends to the ruin of a state prevailed in the court—luxury, immodesty, blasphemy, libertinism, and that most impious science which leads the curious to pry into the secrets of futurity by the detestable illusions of magic."

## CHAPTER V.

FRANCIS II. 1559—1560.

So many celebrated persons begin now to be closely connected with the history of Protestantism in France, that a slight description of some of them is required to render it intelligible and interesting.

The reigning monarch, Francis II., was the most insignificant of these. He was about sixteen at the time of his father's death, but the laws of France ended the minority of sovereigns in their fourteenth year. This unhappy youth possessed a cold heart, an infirm body, and a weak intellect. Though only sixteen when he ascended the throne, he had been previously married to the beautiful Mary Stuart, whose lamentable death, as queen of Scots, left a dark spot on the glories of our Elizabeth's reign.

Of a totally different character from the young reigning couple, was the king's mother, the terrible Catharine de' Medici, whose name posterity will probably never tire of recording, as one which sums up all that is contrary to that of woman. She was apparently totally

devoid of feminine feeling, and utterly divested of principle. In her breast the desire for power stifled every other; to gratify this ruling passion, every private affection and public duty was unscrupulously sacrificed. Her whole life, from the time of her husband's death, was one contest for power, which she had not abilities sufficient to grasp at once, or which the superior power of opposing factions prevented her from retaining. Craft and deceit formed the basis of her policy. She brought up her sons, who were more or less her victims, on the maxim of that extraordinary tyrant, Louis XI.: "He who knows not how to dissimulate, knows not how to reign;" but, added to this, was the still more forcibly impressed maxim of entire subserviency to their mother.

She was the friend or foe of the Protestants, just as it suited her own ends: at one time, writing of them, or speaking to them, in terms which might appear dictated by all the sincerity of conviction; at another, pursuing them with a hatred which reached even beyond death. "When she called any one friend," says a witty historian, "it was a proof that she thought the person a fool, or was very angry, so that a gentleman used to say to her, 'Have the goodness, Madam, to call me enemy.'" She acted herself on the weak and wicked policy expressed in the saying, "Divide and govern." She fomented the divisions of the kingdom, and tried to prevent any party from

becoming too powerful, in order that her own authority might be paramount. More secret, if not darker crimes, are imputed to her than those which met the light of day. She is supposed to have practised those arts of poisoning for which her native land—Italy—was once celebrated. Yet her appearance was as deceitful as her nature. Her countenance—that usual index to the soul—was soft and mild. “She was fair and beautiful, of a majestic presence, gentle and sweet in manner, and of a most excellent grace.” Her daughters were renowned as women of great beauty, and her hands, which were dyed in blood, were unusually well-formed.

As it often happens to crafty and deceitful people, however, Catharine’s arts usually recoiled upon herself. Her life, on the whole, must have been as miserable as sin and foiled ambition could render it. During the reign of her husband, Henry II., whose accession to the throne she is said to have procured by poisoning his elder brother, she was subjected to the greatest trial and mortification a proud wife or queen could suffer. She saw her rights and influence usurped by a rival, who yet might not, perhaps, contend effectually for the palm of beauty with her, and who, though many years older than the king, maintained, from his youth, the most powerful ascendancy over his feelings. The influence of Diana of Poitiers was retained until the death of Henry. The power which Catharine could not acquire by means of her

husband, she exerted over her sons. She inspired the three princes who successively filled the throne of France with an early awe of their imperious mother. The unhappy queen of Spain said once, that she always trembled when she received a letter from her mother, lest, though so far removed, and subject to other authority, she might unconsciously have given her cause of offence. All her children were thus trained up in habits of awe, deference, and submission to her dictates.

In the instance of Francis, the eldest, his mother's influence was lessened by his love for his fascinating and most unequally-matched wife, Mary of Scots, who engrossed the only attachment he had ever been known to feel.

Two other prominent persons have been already mentioned, but will henceforth come more constantly before us. These are, the celebrated duke of Guise, and his brother, the cardinal of Lorraine.

We need not speak here of the great military genius which made the renowned duke the idol of his country; we must regret that the humanity of disposition, and gentleness of manners, which added lustre to his foreign conquests, were so much laid aside during the political fury of the civil war, in which the Protestants and their interests were blended, and in which he was the almost invincible champion of the Roman Catholic party. His attachment to his religion, so far as it went, appears to have been sincere; but his hatred

of Protestantism was probably merely that of a worldly and ambitious man, who saw a powerful party arising in the kingdom, and even invading the state, threatening the ancient institutions on which his own interests were built up, and encroaching on the wealth and power of such families as his own. His brother, the cardinal, would share such sentiments, and instigate such resentments. Do we impute to this cardinal the narrow spirit of bigotry, or, in a churchman, the unholy one of ambition? It must appear to be chiefly the latter. The sacred name of religion has, from the oldest times, been often made "a cloke of maliciousness."

To the bigotry and oppression of this cardinal, the chief part of the miseries of France during the civil war are attributed. Yet his character has been described by a Roman Catholic, though, it must be owned, most unbigoted writer, in the following terms:—"Though he was hated by the Huguenots for his religion, yet was he esteemed a great hypocrite, using religion chiefly as a means of building up his greatness. In prosperity he was very insolent and proud, but in misfortune so mild and gracious, that one of the queen's young ladies, knowing that, when he was low in the world, he sought and courted every one, would say to him when he graciously addressed her, 'Tell us what has befallen you? certainly some misfortune has happened.'" The cardinal, however, was learned and eloquent;

his great talents were zealously devoted to the extermination of Protestantism, whatever might be the ruling motive that put them into operation; and the means he used in their service were most unscrupulous.

Next we must mention the old constable Montmorency, who had been prime minister to Henry II., contrary to the express wish of his dying father, Francis I. Montmorency was a harsh-tempered and superstitious man, but appears to have possessed a greater degree of principle and conscientiousness than most of the persons who acted a conspicuous part at this eventful time. The description which the lively writer before quoted, who was his contemporary, gives of him, has unhappily had its parallel in history, though recorded in graver terms. "The constable Montmorency," he says, "never failed in his devotions, nor ever missed a paternoster; for whether on horseback, or elsewhere, or in the field with the armies, he ever muttered his prayers as occasion presented, and would still keep crying out to his followers, 'Hang up such a one to a tree—Fire on the rascals who resist the king's order—Burn me that village—Ravage all the district.' Such like words of justice or war he used without ever ceasing his paternosters, until they were finished, thinking it a great sin to omit any of the number until the whole were ended, on any occasion whatsoever, and at the proper hour; so very conscientious was he!"



Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, has been named among the Protestants of the last reign, and will occupy a more conspicuous place in those that follow. We must see him, however, deserting their ranks. His character has been so well described by native historians of the age, that their words are transcribed without note or comment. "He was a man of a fickle and irresolute disposition, taking one side, and changing to the other. The opinions he renounced always appeared to him the best. In religion he fluctuated, as in other things; was neither a good Catholic, nor a stedfast Lutheran." Such a vacillating disposition, always injurious to its possessor, combined with the extreme selfishness and worldly policy of the king of Navarre, rendered him an untrue friend, or a mischievous enemy to the Protestant cause.

A totally different character was his wife, the truly Protestant Jeanne; perhaps it might be said the most uncompromising Protestant, in the legitimate sense of the term, that her generation produced.

Without dwelling on a subject which we should be obliged to pursue to too great a length, we must proceed to mention the great leaders of the Protestant cause. The first of these, as opposed to Guise, is admiral Coligny; pre-eminent, indeed, in every way. Next his brother, Andelot. Another brother of these Protestant leaders was the cardinal Chatillon. The first two have been much celebrated in

history, though, of course, their actions and motives would be greatly misrepresented by the prejudice of the party to which they were so long and so vigorously opposed.

Coligny had done good service to his king and country in foreign war, before he was called, by circumstances which it appeared impossible to resist, to put himself at the head of the Protestants, and finally to become, in fact, the leader of the armies of the civil war.

Liberty, for himself and fellow-subjects, to exercise the rites of the religion they professed, was all that he declared he wanted to obtain. He was unwilling to secure this by means of the sword; a Christian must always be so. "Men of blood shall not live out half their days." "If we have our religion," Coligny used to say, "what more do we want?"

He was always what is termed "a religious man," having been a good Catholic before he became a good Protestant. He had maintained a number of priests on his estates for the instruction of the people, and founded schools for the same purpose.

Admiral Coligny was led to embrace the reformed opinions chiefly by means of his brother, Andelot, and then he substituted Protestant ministers and teachers in place of those of the church of Rome.

Though very cautious, he was of a decided character, and would not, like the king of Navarre, easily forsake an opinion he had once positively formed. He possessed great courage,

and a perseverance which was only stimulated by difficulty.

His religion was not that of party spirit, nor made subservient to politics. His domestic life proved this. In his family and house the reformed worship was daily observed. His wife, a Protestant lady, of decided religious principles, also maintained the strictest decorum, so that the mansion exhibited a striking contrast to the frivolity and disorder that prevailed generally in the establishments of the nobility.

The admiral's brother, Andelot, was of a different character, more ardent, incautious, and enthusiastic. The brothers—as is often the case, between persons of opposite temperaments—were fondly attached. “They loved, aided, and supported each other.” The fraternal affection of Andelot was shown in his desire to impart to the admiral the religious truth he had himself learned. The French historian tells us, in his own way, how this was acquired.

Andelot had been taken prisoner in Piedmont, in battle, and was confined in the castle of Milan. “It was there,” says this Roman Catholic writer, “that he learned his fine religion; for having no other exercises, he set himself to read, and had all sorts of books brought to him, the inquisition not being then so strict as it has since become. And thus he learned the new religion, though indeed he had got the first scent of it before in the Protestant

wars in Germany. . . . . Such are the sad fruits of idleness; and so many evil things doth it teach us which we have cause for ever to repent of."

It was, most probably, the works of the reformers, which thus amused or employed the "idleness" of Andelot. There is every reason to believe that, while yet a prisoner in person, he received in spirit the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free.

"He is the free-man whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves besides."

His noble answer to Henry II. has been reserved for this place. That king, having heard that this gallant officer, who was colonel-general of the French infantry, had used some expressions which the cardinal of Lorraine thought ought not to be allowed utterance, sent for Andelot in private, and questioned him as to his religion.

"Sire," he replied, "I can use no disguise in matters of conscience, neither can I deceive my God in those of religion. You can dispose of my life, of my property, and of the offices I hold: but my soul is subject only to the Creator from whom I received it, and whom, in this respect, it is my only duty to obey as my Almighty Master. In a word, I would rather die than go to mass."

We can scarcely believe that a king could be so base as to strike with his sword the man

whose moral courage was thus evinced. Henry was not guilty of killing Andelot ; he sent him to prison, and deprived him of his rank in the army. His pardon was finally effected, though the pope insisted on his condemnation.

Two other brothers, who took a conspicuous place in the troubled annals of the time, were as unlike as the Colignys. These were the king of Navarrè, and his brother, the prince de Condé, who, as the commander-in-chief of the Protestant army, should, perhaps, have been placed before the two former.

But Condé was certainly more a political than a religious leader of the French Protestants. He was ambitious, lively, witty, brave, generous, excessively fond of pleasure, beloved, notwithstanding his faults, and admired in spite of his errors. He was poor, yet generous and unselfish ; and his wife, who was a firm Protestant, was greatly attached to him.

Such were the chief personages who are now to act a principal part in the history of Protestantism in France. It remains only to mention the manner in which parties stood at the accession of Francis II.

Mary queen of Scots, the wife of this feeble sovereign, was the niece of the duke of Guise and of the cardinal of Lorraine. That unhappy young king was wholly devoted to her, as was she likewise to her uncles. Under such circumstances, it is easy to see that the hopes of the Protestants, if raised by the death

of their late persecutor, must soon be crushed by his successor. The king would inevitably become a mere instrument in the hands of the proud and ambitious Guises.

The next personage of rank, the power-loving queen Catharine, found herself released from an unhappy marriage. A desire for vengeance on her presumptuous rival was natural to an unchristian mind, and during the first changes caused by the death of king Henry, the Guises, to conciliate her favour, co-operated in this desire. Montmorency, who was the near relation of that rival, was also their political enemy, and, to keep him from obtaining favour with the young king, they instantly sent to summon the king of Navarre and the Bourbon princes to court, not hesitating, at the moment of this crisis, to call in Protestant support, if it would serve their own purposes. Catharine's enmity expelled both Montmorency and her rival, Diana; but the result was not gratifying to that thirst for power which appeared destined to be mocked. When Montmorency was removed, the uncles of the young queen closed all access to the throne except by their means. They got the boyish monarch completely into their power, and usurped, in fact, the supreme authority, leaving him with the sceptre of royalty in his hand to enforce their decrees.

Thus Catharine found herself opposed to more formidable rivals in power. The constable Montmorency, who was now expelled

from court and from power, was uncle to admiral Coligny and his brothers. Burning with indignation at the contempt thus poured on his age, he looked to them as his avengers on the haughty Guises; but they were now at the head of the Protestant party, and no consideration, or provocation, could induce the stern old minister to join that hated sect. In this he showed that degree of principle which other courtiers were found to want.

The king of Navarre, who had been called to court, arrived there too late; the Guises were already in power. According to the fashion of the time, when a visitor of consequence was expected at court, the king went out to hunt in the direction it was thought he would come, and met him as if by accident, so conducting him to the palace with all honour. But, on the arrival of the king of Navarre, Francis had been sent to hunt in a contrary direction; the undesired guest arrived alone, and was ill received.

In this dilemma, Navarre had recourse to queen Catharine, who, finding the power of the Guises most adverse to hers, and, fearing the further attempts of their ambition, took part with the insulted monarch, and expressed herself in favour of the Protestants.

The king of Navarre was of too undecided a disposition at once to take a prominent part as the leader of a party, but his brother, the prince de Condé, more readily did so. He was connected both with Montmorency and

Coligny, and thus political leaders were given to what had hitherto been a purely religious contest.

The very first proceeding with regard to the Protestants, on the accession of Francis, or rather on the cardinal of Lorraine's coming into power, showed what treatment they might expect. The councillor Dubourg, after a trial, which he prolonged by pleading, was sentenced to death. He was hung, and his body burned. During his trial, his judge had shown so much of personal enmity, that the innocent man warned him of the fact, that he must soon appear at a tribunal where no injustice can take place. Very soon after, this judge was shot, it is supposed, by a Scotch gentleman, named Robert Stuart. The Protestants were accused of having instigated the deed; but, though tortured to extract confession, Stuart refused to criminate himself or any one else. He escaped death, and we shall yet hear more of him.

A cruel persecution was again carried on: the tribunal of the inquisition even exceeded its former zeal. Informers daily brought reports, and the judges of heretics, tried, convicted, and executed them, with astonishing celerity. Another means of discovering the Protestants was found out. Images and pictures of the virgin Mary are common both in the streets and highways of Roman Catholic countries. The people of France were led to assemble before these to practise their devotions.



Passers-by were invited to join in worship, and all such as refused were subjected to immediate violence, or to the greater danger of being denounced to the tribunal. The cardinal of Lorraine now possessed unbridled power. The duke of Guise was at the next step to the throne, to which he was suspected of aspiring. Even the princes of the blood were cast into the shade, and the haughty temper and violent passions of the cardinal gave offence to many of the leading Roman Catholics. As the tyranny of the Guises offended, or mortified, the courtiers and nobles, the ranks of the Protestants were externally increased by numbers who joined them from political discontent.

In this cause originated the unhappy conspiracy of Amboise; which, if it had been successful, might have spared France much blood; but, as it was the reverse, only caused more to be shed. There is something in the very name of conspiracy at which the mind revolts; yet the object of this was not bad; it was to release the weak young king from the thralldom of the Guises, and to drive these ambitious men from the government. "Three kinds of persons," says Beza, the Calvinist historian of the time, "engaged in the affair; the first moved by a righteous zeal to serve God, their prince, and country; others, incited by ambition or love of change; the third, urged by desire of vengeance on account of injuries received from the Guises, either by

themselves or their friends. Such being the case, we need not marvel if there were confusion in the conduct of the enterprise, and a tragic termination put to it."

The prince de Condé is believed to have been at the head of this plot, but secretly, and under the stipulation that nothing should be attempted to the injury of the king, or the royal family. There was, however, an under agent employed, whose history, as well as that of the disclosure of the plot, reminds us of Guy Fawkes. The name of this man was De Barri. He had fled from France owing to a charge of forgery, and at Geneva had mixed with Protestants who had left their native land, or been exiled from it. He was, therefore, it is supposed, employed by the political leaders of this movement, to engage the co-operation of the Protestants of France.

In a full assembly, he stated the plan that was in contemplation, and having sworn that he would do nothing against the royal family, but defend to his latest breath the majesty of the throne, the authority of the laws and liberty of the land against all foreigners, his proposal of proceeding against the Guises, and for the deliverance of the king, was answered by a universal cry, "We swear." All present took an oath of fidelity, embraced one another in tears, denouncing severely whoever should treacherously betray their purpose. Unfortunately, their chief, or at least the agent of their chiefs—for the great names were never

distinctly made known—was the first, through incaution, to betray this secret. He disclosed it to a friend with whom he lodged when at Paris. The friend quickly informed the secretary of the duke of Guise, and instant measures were taken to obviate a danger, the precise nature of which was not, however, made known.

Admiral Coligny and Andelot were desired by Catharine to appear at court. The admiral, who is universally said to have been ignorant of the plot, obeyed the summons without hesitation, and took occasion to plead the cause of the Protestants, representing so forcibly the impolicy of continuing the penal laws against them, that an edict was drawn up rather more in their favour. But four days only then intervened before the attack of the conspirators was to be made on the castle of Blois, where the king then was. The Guises removed him for greater security to that of Amboise, not far distant from Blois, and on the river Loire.

The conspirators assembled; but, in consequence of the duke's precautions, their enterprise entirely failed. After a desperate struggle, De Barri was shot, and escaped a more cruel death.

The vengeance taken by the government almost exceeds belief. More than one thousand two hundred men were slaughtered in the small town of Amboise, and when the executioners were weary of slaying, the poor creatures were bound and cast into the river Loire, which runs by the castle. On its battlements many

were hung, and others were tortured to procure a confession which should implicate the Colignys and the prince de Condé. But this object was not attained.

The baron de Castelnau was one of the most illustrious of these sufferers. He was taken prisoner with fifteen followers, and submitted to the torture, after the barbarous fashion which only slowly gave way before the influence of the principles diffused by the reformation. But nothing could force him to declare that the purpose of the conspiracy was otherwise than to overthrow the usurped authority of the Guises ; which intention they all declared was a lawful one. The baron defended his religious opinions with so much ability, that the chancellor, who acted from fear rather than from conviction in judging him, tauntingly asked where he had studied theology.

The baron replied, " You know well where I studied theology, for after my imprisonment in Flanders I told you I had there studied the Scriptures. . . . Have you forgotten how you then praised my study, and advised me to attend the assemblies at Paris? Did you not then say I had chosen the better part? Can you then dare, thus trembling on the verge of the grave, to please that cardinal, after having by God's grace received the knowledge of the truth, deny your religion, and renounce your conscience and your duties? Was it not enough that you lent yourself, contrary to your conscience, to the destruction of the harmless

congregations of Merindol and Cabrières? Did you not with tears declare that for that offence God had rejected you? Unhappy man, you have denied your God and his word!"

Such is only a part of the speech which Castelnau is reported to have made to the chancellor, who hung down his head in silence, but signed the sentence of his condemnation.

Castelnau, with his fifteen gentlemen, were beheaded before the windows of the castle; the young king, his lovely queen, and all the royal princes, beholding the horrid sight. One of the sufferers dipped his hands in the blood of his comrades, and holding them up, cried aloud, "Lord, behold the blood of thy servants! Thou wilt avenge it!"

The unhappy chancellor was instantly overwhelmed with remorse and fear. He had himself been suspected of joining in the conspiracy against the Guises, and fear of man had been stronger in his heart than fear of God. He hurried to his room after this dreadful scene, threw himself on his bed, and arose no more. He died within a few days. He refused to speak to the cardinal of Lorraine, whom he called "that accursed cardinal," declaring that he was the author of all the bloodshed. He died utterly inconsolable.

The chancellor who succeeded this perhaps really good, but temporizing man, was one whose tolerant principles might, a little earlier, have allayed the ferment that was now general in France.

L'Hôpital persuaded the duke of Guise to hold a national council at Fontainbleau, for the purpose of ascertaining and regulating the religious differences of the kingdom. The Guises, knowing that by such a convocation of the nobility for the purpose of discussion, they would more easily find out their enemies, agreed to the proposal.

So many instances of treachery and duplicity had occurred, that neither the Bourbon princes, nor, indeed, any of the party opposed to the Guises, put much faith in the declarations of the court, and looked upon the summons to attend this council with great suspicion. The king of Navarre and prince de Condé, instead of going to Fontainbleau, went into the country, and occupied themselves in raising troops. Admiral Coligny and his brother attended the council. The former brought a petition from the Protestant body, which, as was customary, he presented kneeling to the king. It contained a prayer that persecution might cease; and stated that, though called heretics, the petitioners were willing to abide by the authority of the Scriptures, but pleaded that the pope was not the person to decide on questions concerning them, as his decrees were more partial than just.

In answer to a speech from the eloquent cardinal against the Protestants, Coligny remarked, that he spoke in the name of fifty thousand people. "This," says Brantome, "so angered the duke, that he declared he

would break the heads of his fifty thousand Protestants with a hundred thousand good Catholics."

The duke and the admiral had been friends in youth, as well as fellow-soldiers in the service of their country; it was only now that their former friendship was entirely abandoned, and enmity substituted in its place. Henceforth, these men are to confront each other in a long and fearful struggle. The king of Navarre and his brother, being princes of the blood-royal, were obstacles to the ambition of the Guises. Condé was already charged with a share in the conspiracy of Amboise, and both thought it more prudent to keep away from court. They were summoned to attend a meeting of the states-general at Orléans, and finally informed that, if absent on that occasion, they should be treated as criminals. Navarre, frightened into obedience, prepared to attend the summons, and dismissed his little band with the assurance of obtaining their pardon from the king. "Go," replied an old soldier, "and obtain your own if you can; we will find ours with our swords."

The prince de Condé was advised by all his friends not to go to Orléans, as they considered his safety very doubtful. The same advice was given to Coligny, whose brother, the cardinal Chatillon, was very anxious to deter him from doing so; but his desire to obtain an edict for Protestant liberty at that general assembly, made him resolve to risk any danger. The

advice of cardinal Bourbon, the brother of Condé, also prevailed with the prince to go to the king.

Francis received Navarre and his brother with coldness, and conducted them to his mother, who, more deceitfully, welcomed them with warmth. A few high words passed between the king and Condé, the former reproaching the prince with having made an attempt on his life. Francis left the room, and Condé was instantly arrested. As the officer took him from the door to place him in prison, his attendant asked if he should want his horse. "Alas!" said the brave young prince, "I shall never want him again!" So certain, to his own mind, was the fate that awaited him. The grief and fear of the king of Navarre were extreme. Though not arrested, he was himself closely watched; so also were Coligny and Andelot. The cardinal of Bourbon wept as his brother passed him, and reproached him for his advice.

"I saw the king of Navarre," says Brantome, "come twice that evening to the cardinal of Lorraine, once in his chamber and once in the garden, not like a prince, but like a simple gentleman, to solicit him for his brother; speaking to him with his hat off, though it was very cold, while the cardinal was quite at his ease."

But no entreaties could avail for the unfortunate prince, who preserved his courage and gaiety while waiting the sentence of death. His



wife knelt to the king only for permission to see him, promising not to speak a word, nor even make a sign. But such supplications only irritated a weak mind and revengeful temper. A priest was sent to Condé, though his wife was not allowed to see him; but he would not temporize in religion, and declined to receive him.

As the king of Navarre could not well be brought to the scaffold, it was proposed to assassinate him, and some authors assert that Francis was to perform the deed himself, as if in a moment of passion: others say a sign was to be made by him for the entrance of the assassin, while the two royal persons were conversing. However it was, the heart of the unhappy youth is believed to have failed, and Navarre was suffered to leave his presence. The duke of Guise, seeing this, exclaimed, "What a poor cowardly boy he is!"

Condé was condemned to death. During the interval that elapsed, his cheerfulness remained the same; he was tranquil while every one was disturbed for him. A great change, however, was at hand. About a week before the day appointed for the execution of the prince, Francis was taken ill. His illness was of a singular character, such as to cause suspicions that poison had been administered, a practice which was very common at that day. The chancellor, who, under various pretences, had put off signing the warrant for Condé's execution, now resolved to delay it longer, in hope

that the death of Francis might save the prince. To effect this object, he pretended to be ill.

The Guises, alarmed at the state of the king's health, and anxious to have Condé removed out of their way, sent to the chancellor's house to get the order signed, but the poor chancellor was seized with such a violent attack of pain that they could not effect their object.

While the wretched young king was dying, the factions of his court were busy. The Guises knew they must lose their great means of power when their niece, the young queen, lost hers; and as Catharine de' Medici would again come into power, their policy was to obtain her favour. The good chancellor, who was anxious to save Condé, had convinced Catharine that, by destroying these Bourbon princes, she would injure her own interests, and give more power to the formidable Guises; that politic woman, therefore, had in time negotiated with the king of Navarre, and induced him to resign all claim to be the regent of France during the minority of her next son, who must succeed his dying brother; and, in return, she stipulated to save his brother, the prince de Condé.

Francis II. died in the eighteenth year of his age, after a distracted reign of seventeen months. Such was his character, that it was said the only benefit he ever conferred upon the world, was to leave it so early. His decease saved Condé. The calmness with which the prince had heard his condemnation to death, was

scarcely shaken by the tidings of his reprieve. An attendant came to the prison to inform him of the king's decease, but was afraid to do so in the hearing of his jailer; he contrived, by stooping under the table, to cause the prince to stoop also, and then whispered, "Our man is dead!"

Together with other deeds, of which, perhaps, she was guiltless, Catharine de' Medici has been accused of causing the surgeon to put poison into an abscess in the ear of her son Francis; the king's death being the only means of affording her the power for which she thirsted.

We shall now keep closer to the history of Protestantism, with which all these events are intimately connected.

## CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES IX. 1560—1574.

### PART I.

THE church of Notre Dame de Cléry, not far from Orléans, where Francis II. died, is famous as being the scene of the extraordinary devotions of that singularly cruel tyrant, Louis XI. There he used to supplicate the virgin Mary, whom, in the hope of preserving the life he lived in dread of losing, he had created colonel of his guards. To that same church did one of his successors on the throne of France, despatch a band of pilgrims in his last sickness, to make a vow at the altar of "Our Lady of Cléry," that, if he were allowed to recover, he would utterly exterminate heretics from his kingdom. This vow was made by Francis II. shortly before his death. That event, however, materially changed the aspect of Protestant affairs.

His next brother, Charles, ascended the throne at ten years of age. His mother, Catharine, was appointed regent, and thus attained her aim, the possession of supreme authority.

Her indefatigable and crafty policy was

directed towards the maintenance of an equal balance of power among the opposing factions, or parties, so that her own might be superior to all. By lowering the Guises, and bringing forward the king of Navarre and the prince de Condé, she meant to equalize the political influence of the two great parties in the kingdom. Both of these tried to win the stern old Montmorency; but at first he would not join his great enemies, the Guises; and he detested the Protestants to the last. He came to court when summoned by the queen, knelt to kiss his little sovereign's hand, shed tears upon it, and promised to sacrifice his life, if necessary, in his king's defence.

The Protestant interests were now greatly favoured. The chancellor, L'Hôpital, indulged the hope of introducing religious toleration in France; and thus extinguishing the feud that for so many years had destroyed peace, life, and property, and greatly injured the cause of piety. The Guises, though stripped of much of their authority, were still looked up to as the heads of the Roman Catholic party, and the defenders of the church. The policy of Catharine led her to patronize their opponents. Protestantism was not only tolerated for the time being, but became fashionable. Reserve was thrown off; the real sentiments of numbers became apparent; others, to whom all religion was alike indifferent, fell in with the fashion of the court, which now appeared to be almost wholly Protestant. Calvinistic ministers were

admitted even to preach in the palace. The churches were nearly empty, and the Protestant assemblies crowded. Meat was publicly sold during Lent, and served at the tables of those who had never yet decidedly professed the reformed religion. The superstitions of the Roman church formed a common subject of discourse. But a more important matter was, that an edict was issued, forbidding any persons to be disturbed in their religion. A Jesuit deplores the fact, that "heresy was now seen triumphantly to enter the palace of the most Christian king, and to exercise there a complete sway." We shall see, hereafter, that there was *one* "good Catholic," at least, in that palace, a child of seven years old, Catharine's daughter, Margaret.

Our old Bunyan has said, that it is a dangerous time when religion walks in her silver slippers. In the spiritual history of Christ's church this is generally true. But Protestantism in France was seldom exposed to this danger, and its sudden elevation might predict as great a depression. This favourable aspect of things soon changed; how could it be otherwise, when the countenance that smiled on the Protestant cause was that of Catharine de' Medici?

The line of policy she pursued disgusted the harsh and superstitious, yet more conscientious Montmorency; and the state of the finances having induced the king of Navarre to propose recalling the extravagant grants made in the

last two reigns, the duke of Guise, Montmorency, and marshal St. André, fearing to have to refund the vast sums they had received, formed a league to protect themselves, and resist the Protestant party. To this object the long-subsisting enmity of Guise and Montmorency yielded; and, repairing together to church, accompanied by marshal St. André, they solemnly swore at the altar to renounce all private jealousies, and unite for the purpose of defending religion and exterminating the heretics.

To excite the wrath of a fanatic multitude, it was reported that the queen regent was a Protestant, and that it was on account of her own heresy she interfered to save some who had been condemned to die. Two powerful parties now opposed each other. Guise, Montmorency, and St. André, who were called the triumvirs, were at the head of the Roman Catholic; the king of Navarre and prince de Condé, at that of the Protestant.

The queen's policy, or art, was directed to moderate the authority of each. Of no religion herself, her only desire was to control both. For this cause, she conciliated the Protestants, lest they should attach themselves too closely to the king of Navarre, as their only support, and render him formidable to her, as aspiring to the regency; and for this cause, too, she conciliated the duke of Guise, lest, if the Protestants grew too powerful for her, she should require his support.

By a decree of the parliament of 1561, the Protestants were expressly forbidden to assemble for public worship; but, by the same decree, all violent proceedings against them were suspended until a general council should have been held. When their petition for the liberty of holding public worship was refused, the duke of Guise expressed the greatest satisfaction, and declared that to maintain that law, he would not let his sword ever stick to the scabbard.

A temporary peace was, however, granted, and the lives of men were spared if they prayed in their own language, or worshipped God according to their own belief. The public voice, indeed, though not with the people who were called Protestant, was generally raised in a protest against the abuses of the established church. The representatives of the country, in an assembly of the states-general, loudly decried the ignorance and dissolute habits of the religious orders, and urged the public wish, that the great wealth of ecclesiastics should be better divided, and a part of it appropriated to paying off the debts of the crown.

The necessity of reform was felt, and a general council was proposed and unanimously demanded, for the purpose of considering the question. The Council of Trent, originally convened for the same object, was then holding its sittings. The pope most strenuously opposed the desire of the people of France. The name of council was, therefore, resigned; but notwithstanding the opposition of the papacy, a general



conference was appointed, at which the chief points of difference between the Roman Catholic and the reformed churches were to be discussed. The bishops and dignitaries of the former, and the principal divines and ministers of the latter, were invited to attend this conference, to be held at Poissy.

The cardinal of Lorraine was much blamed by his church for permitting this conference. He should, indeed, have known that Rome prohibits discussion. The general of the Jesuits was sent by the pope to try to stop it. He declared there was "nothing more dangerous than to discuss with heretics, who, in Scripture, are compared to wolves in sheep's clothing, and to foxes, because, under an ambiguous expression, they insinuate the venom of their heresy."

The cardinal, however, who had conveyed his unfortunate niece to her kingdom of Scotland, and left her to struggle there, more unsuccessfully, with the same religion he wished to crush in France, had shown a willingness to admit of a conference in which he, probably, believed his great talents and eloquence would obtain him a triumph over the scanty band of twelve reformed ministers, who were to appear there in opposition to five cardinals, forty bishops, and a great body of doctors of theology.

Calvin was invited to attend this discussion, as the usually-acknowledged leader of the French Protestants; but that reformer was

then safely settled at Geneva, after many dangers and escapes in his native country: he had probably no desire to tempt again "the wrath of the lion," and deputed Theodore Beza, also a French Protestant, and who afterwards wrote the Church History of his times, to supply his place at Poissy.

Beza says, that when he arrived at St. Germain, where the court was, he preached in the hall of the prince de Condé, "to a very great and notable assembly;" that no tumult nor scandal occurred; and, after nightfall, he was called to the apartments of the king of Navarre, where he met the queen and other great persons—among them, the cardinal of Lorraine. The latter addressed him in the presence of the company, and implored him to render back to the service of his country and religion the great gifts with which God had endowed him; so that, as his schism had done much injury, his return to the church might tend to restore peace. Beza's polite reply was, that the cardinal attributed too much influence to one so insignificant as he was.

The conference of Poissy was held on the 9th of September, 1561. The place of meeting was the large eating-room of a monastery, wherein were assembled all the chief persons of the church or state. The young king and the queen regent, the princes of the blood royal, and all their courts; the bishops and cardinals, in their splendid dresses. These must have formed a strong contrast to the

simplicity of the Calvinist ministers, attired only in black gowns and bands.

The chancellor, whose aim was toleration and uniformity, opened the meeting in a speech, wherein he hinted a desire that the Catholic clergy would moderate some points of doctrine, or observance, so as to allow their opponents to approach them more nearly.

Beza was then called on to address the assembly. He advanced into the centre of the room, and instantly knelt down, the other Protestant ministers doing the same; then prayed aloud and fervently to God. The effect produced was powerful, the more so as no one was prepared for such a proceeding. The beauty of his language, the softness of his manner, and deep earnestness of his voice, impressed all who heard him.

The account of his speech which follows is from the pen of Catharine de' Medici. "He began in gentle and moderate words, saying, that if it could be proved from Scripture that he was in error, he was ready to yield to the truth; but, falling at length on the doctrine of the holy sacrament, he forgot himself, so as to speak in a manner so absurd, and so offensive to all present, that I was on the point of commanding him to be silent; but, thinking they might turn this interruption to their own advantage, I allowed him to proceed."

The offensive words were on the subject of transubstantiation. Up to that point, Beza had defended the reformers' doctrine without assail-

ing those they protested against; but then he gave utterance to the opinion, that though the very body and blood of Christ were in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, received spiritually by faith; yet that he believed the actual body of Christ to be as far from the real bread and wine as heaven was from earth.

Cardinal Tournon would fain have stopped the speaker; but though some angry expressions escaped, Beza was allowed to end his speech. The cardinal of Lorraine then murmured the words, "Would to God that man had been dumb, or that we had all been deaf!" He was Beza's chief opponent, and took two articles of his faith as his subject—the authority of the church, and the doctrine of the real presence in the sacrament. He made a long and brilliant harangue. As soon as he uttered the last words, the other cardinals and bishops gathered round the little king, eagerly saying to him, "'There, that is the Catholic faith; that is the pure doctrine of the church; we are ready to die for it if required."

The boy-king was only allowed to retain the impression of the cardinal's brilliant speech. Beza wished to reply, but was not permitted; and Charles was not suffered to attend any other discussions of the conference.

Indeed, these discussions, as is frequently the case, produced no great result; certainly they did nothing to bring about reform in the church, though some of the bishops are believed to have received some light and know-

ledge from Beza. The great point of disputation was transubstantiation, and the discussion may be said to have closed by each party retaining his own opinion, and each side claiming the victory.

The king of Navarre, some time afterwards, affirmed, as an excuse for his conduct, that it was at this conference he first discovered that there was any difference in the religious opinions of Protestants. The cause of this difference appearing was, that some German divines were present who held Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation. The cardinal took advantage of the opportunity to ask Beza if he, like Martin Luther, held the doctrine of consubstantiation. To which Beza replied, "And do you, like Martin Luther, reject that of transubstantiation?" On this occasion, the learning and elegance of Beza did much to remove the bitter prejudice against the followers of Calvin, which a harsher manner would have increased.

The pope, fearing that another of the chief kingdoms of Europe was about to throw off its allegiance, despatched instructions to his agent at Paris to neglect no means of strengthening the Catholic interest in France. The vacillating king of Navarre became the prize, which that party aimed at obtaining. He was offered the kingdom of Sardinia as a compensation for the inferior one of Navarre, which the king of Spain had seized. He declined the offer, perhaps not at first putting faith in its sincerity. The Guises then, in conjunction with the pope's

legate, proposed to him to procure a divorce from his wife, the Protestant queen of Navarre, and to give him, instead, the hand of the fair Mary of Scots, with her kingdom. He rejected this proposal also. He had a son, a fine and engaging boy, on whom his hopes were fixed. It is most probable that, for the sake of this son, afterwards the famous Henry iv., he refused to divorce his wife; but he soon yielded in other respects to the temptations presented to him; and, deserting Protestantism and the Protestants, was gladly received by their adversaries.

An attempt to win his uncompromising wife to a like change was unavailing; the queen replied that, "If she had her kingdom in one hand, and her son in the other, she would cast both into the sea rather than go to mass."

The mansion of the queen of Navarre had been open to the oppressed Protestants, and there they had been allowed to assemble to receive the exhortations of their ministers, and derive, from their prayers, consolation under suffering. But, by the defection of the king, this great benefit was lost to them. To Protestants of rank the advantage derived from "the preaching," as their worship was called, in the palace of the king of Navarre, was, perhaps, greater, and the loss more deeply felt, than it would have been by those of a lower condition, to whom, under the circumstances of the times, religious instruction and consolation were more accessible. By these, the

event was deplored, when, in consequence of her husband's turning to the church of Rome, Jeanne was prohibited from holding Protestant assemblies at her house.

The consternation of Catharine was extreme when she found out the intentions of Navarre. She saw that, if his influence were joined to that of the Guises, her own supremacy would be in danger. Her last hope was admiral Coligny, who, having disliked her politics and distrusted her sincerity, had kept aloof from her, though he had watched the proceedings of Navarre and the Guises, and was aware of the treaty they had set on foot with the king of Spain, who, having his own designs on France, was ready, independently of Roman Catholic zeal, to foment its divisions and forward their views.

In order to win the support of Coligny, Catharine undertook to befriend the Protestants; and the desertion of the king of Navarre was thus the means of affording them more protection, although they did not obtain the religious liberty which it was Coligny's great object to procure. Still, Protestantism in France appeared in a more favourable, or, rather, a less oppressed condition.

The state of France, generally, must have been most injurious to the spirit of pure religion; and the example given by the great, who, as their interests dictated, oppressed or protected the Protestants, must have produced evil results on the lower classes of a people but partially enlightened, and naturally excitable. While en-

joying some degree of royal favour, the Protestants were guilty of a gross outrage, in breaking into a church, demolishing statues, and even shedding blood in the tumult. The reason stated by historians is, that the bell for vespers disturbed them while listening to a preacher; and that the messengers they sent to request it might cease were ill-treated. But is this an excuse? Their conduct, even if not the first aggressors, was unjustifiable; they had no right to make such a request, and their duty, in any case, was to remember our blessed Lord's command—"When they smite you on one cheek turn to them the other also." But, as the Roman Catholic was the established religion of the land, they had no right to request that the bell for its services should cease to sound.

The origin of the term Huguenot has never been found out. It was about this time it began to be commonly given to the French Protestants. Some French author says, that it was invented first at Tours, and arose from a local custom of terrifying children with the bugbear of a certain king Hugo; and thus Protestants, as objects of fear and horror, came to receive an appellation from this frightful and imaginary personage. Perhaps such a derivation of the title is quite as likely as a more learned one. We all know what absurd names have been given to religious sects in England.

The old chancellor, L'Hôpital, was a liberal in principle. He argued as a liberal would now do. He wished to put an end to tumult



and violence by granting laws which each party must abide by, and to introduce a system of mutual toleration. The Guises opposed this plan, but the chancellor persevered. His arguments were these: Does the interest of the state require, or forbid, that the Calvinists should be allowed to meet for public worship? Supposing the Protestant religion to be in itself bad, is that a reason to the state for forbidding it? Is it not possible to be a good subject without being either a good Catholic or a good Christian?

Such were the liberal arguments of the chancellor. And the law, passed in consequence, chiefly, of these arguments, while it shows us that the Protestants had already been guilty of the violence which has still left its memorials in France, shows us also, most plainly, how moderate their demands still were, and how small a degree of toleration was that for which they unavailingly petitioned.

The prohibitions of this edict we shall mention first. Protestant ministers were not allowed to itinerate from town to town, but must abide with one congregation. They must not attack the doctrines and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church, and their opponents, in return, must no longer inveigh against their religion; "such a practice having hitherto served rather to excite to sedition than to persuade to devotion." No assembly of Protestant ministers, or synod, was to be held without permission of the state and the presence of a magistrate.

No resistance was to be made to the payment of church revenues.

The privileges granted were, a suspension of all penal laws or violent proceedings against them on account of religion, and the great privilege of having places of worship *outside* the towns, where they were allowed to meet unarmed. The article alluded to, as bearing witness to the unlawful violence of the too zealous Protestants, is that which ordains the restoration of all churches on which they had seized, together with the crucifixes, statues, and other adornments, of which they had stripped them.

This law was thought to have granted too much to Protestantism. The high Roman Catholic party heard it in discontented silence. Its terms, however, such as they were, were never fully carried out, and were soon infringed in a most daring manner, and that by the attendants of the duke of Guise, the lieutenant-general of the kingdom, who beheld, if he did not sanction, the massacre of the Protestant worshippers of Vassy.

We must briefly state some political events that intervened.

The sanction of the Protestants by the queen regent caused the triumvirs, or three Roman Catholic leaders, to seek more anxiously the alliance of the bigoted king of Spain and of the pope. They then required Catharine to discard Coligny and his brothers. She pleaded the power of the Protestants, which rendered the service of

these leaders necessary to her to support the state, as otherwise she might be exposed to their enmity. The Spanish ambassador, taking her in her own craftiness, offered the troops of his master to subdue these enemies. This was not what she then desired. If the Protestants fell, the Guises would rise; and, besides, in the case of the king of Spain, she would probably apply the old fable, and know that the fox might, as umpire, eat up the whole portion, while the lawful owners were disputing about the size of their shares.

The triumvirs, however, depended on the assistance of Spain, and, no longer reckoning on Catharine, resolved to seize on the young king, and take him out of his mother's power.

Admiral Coligny now saw that the only hope of Protestantism lay in decision. He called on all persons of rank who had not yet made an open confession of their faith, to come forward and do so. No longer adopting the wavering policy of Navarre, or the temporizing policy of Catharine, he demanded that they should for once and forever declare whose they were, and whom they would serve.

The prince de Condé was among those who responded to the call, and made a public acknowledgment of the Protestant religion. Many men of rank, without actually separating from the Roman church, separated from many of its errors, and others threw off many of its restraints. The cardinal of Chatillon, Coligny's brother, and also the bishop of Nevers, were

openly married. Monks and nuns left their convents ; and, from the number of persons who assembled in the suburbs of Paris alone, for the observance of the Calvinistic worship, we might conclude that the capital must be almost wholly Protestant.

We do not wonder that the indignation of Rome was excited. Anathemas and menaces were pronounced from the pulpits. Alas ! that any sound but that of the gospel of Christ should issue from thence ! But the result was, as it ever had been, and still is, that, whenever occasion offered, the denounced people were assaulted, or murdered, by their ignorant fellow-creatures, who were taught to believe that whoever killed them did God service.

A rising of the Protestants was apprehended, and, at a moment when the people of Paris entertained a serious and natural fear, from seeing the queen regent more closely connected with them, the duke of Guise, the defender of the Roman Catholic church, was absent in the country, and was called to their assistance.

Guise obeyed the call, and was on his road to Paris when the event occurred which has been before alluded to, and to which, in the fearful and bloody annals of the times that followed, additional celebrity has been given, as to it is imputed the outbreak of the civil and religious war that so long desolated France. It is certain that that war must have taken place under the circumstances of the times, and the exasperated feelings that existed. In all

such circumstances, an accident only is required to produce the explosion for which the train is laid. The question at issue had become political as well as religious.

A small town in the ancient province of Champagne, named Vassy, has gained a name on the page of French history as that which first stamped disgrace on the name of Guise, by the cruel outrage perpetrated by his followers, though, with his dying breath, he declared he never instigated it.

The duke, attended by a numerous suite, reached Vassy, on his way to Paris, on a Sunday morning, and at the hour when the Protestants were assembled for worship. It might be remembered, to his prejudice, that, in order to prevent them from this liberty, he had declared that his sword should never stick to its scabbard. But whatever impatient or angry expressions he might have used, it is not likely that such a man as he was, ever authorized a base assault on an unarmed and defenceless people. Guise himself went to hear mass; his people went to the Protestant meeting; and, having provoked by insult some semblance of an excuse, rushed into the chapel with drawn swords, and fell on the unfortunate people, who, in obedience to the laws, were without arms.

The report of the affray was brought to the church where the duke was at prayers. He rushed from it—we cannot believe the statement to be untrue—and hurried to the scene, where, doubtless, one word of his would have arrested

the violence of the people ; but a stone, flung by one who had no other weapon to use, struck him on the cheek, and the sight of his blood redoubled the fury he might otherwise have allayed. Though a command for the massacre of Vassy would appear incompatible with the character of a humane and gallant soldier, it is, on the other hand, a proof of lukewarmness, to say the least, in his wish to arrest that massacre, that he should retire to have a wound dressed which, to a soldier, must have been nothing, leaving so many defenceless persons, men, women, and children, to be murdered. His own party affirmed that no life would have been lost if blood so precious to the nation had not been seen to flow. Perhaps not. But a few drops of the blood of Guise were dearly paid for by more than eighty lives.

The duke of Guise, whose generous and humane conduct gained him in foreign war as much renown as his valour, was henceforth named by the disgraceful title of "The Butcher of Vassy." Such are the lamentable results of civil and religious animosity !

When Beza and Coligny hoped to find the king of Navarre so shocked at this foul business, that, in disgust at the spirit which produced it, he would turn back to the way he had left, they found that he had, on the contrary, received a version of it which displeased him still more with the Protestants. He said he understood that they had made a bad use of the edict lately granted in their favour, and

wished to murder the duke of Guise. How seldom does report speak truly!

Beza replied, that he spoke of a religion which teaches how to endure injuries better than it does to repel them—"But," he added, "remember, sire, it is an anvil that has worn out many hammers." Such, truly, has been the case! The religion of Christ has worn out many a persecutor's blows!

Unfortunately, the massacre of Vassy gave rise to still more frightful massacres in other parts of the country. At Sens so many Protestants were killed that three days were spent in slaughter; their dead bodies floated on the Seine to Paris; and it is said that the young king, walking near that river, observed one of these corpses, and asked what it was. The Protestant attendant answered that it was only some of his majesty's subjects coming to demand justice.

At Amiens, Toulouse, and Cahors, the greatest barbarities were committed. At Sens, the cathedral bell for three days continued to toll, as if summoning the people to a righteous work. At Toulouse, three hundred miserable Protestants were shut up for three days without meat or drink, and then led out, tied in couples, to a common slaughter-house, and killed. It is right, however painful, to mention such facts, in order to show cause, not only for the civil war that was now drawing on, but to account, in some degree, for the ferocity of retaliation that so sadly characterised it,

## CHAPTER VII.

CHARLES IX.

PART II.

THE prince de Condé, and all the Protestants of rank, with the exception of admiral Coligny, were desirous at once to take arms in the cause of their religion and their suffering people. Coligny is said only to have yielded to the representations of his wife on their behalf.

Paris presented a singular scene. The duke of Guise, after the journey just recorded, entered the capital with the air of a conqueror and a sovereign; escorted by Montmorency and two thousand gentlemen, with a strong party of cavalry. He was hailed as the defender of the church, and the deliverer of the people. Condé vainly attempted to attract a portion of popularity. The trains of the rival princes often met in the streets, and it was to the natural generosity of the duke that the latter owed his safety, as his orders, or interference, prevented the collisions which must otherwise have occurred between the numerous followers of Guise and the scanty band of the prince.

Catharine, terrified at these demonstrations



on the part of the ambitious Guise, wrote pressing letters to Condé and Coligny for help against him. The prince made use of these letters from the sovereign to stimulate the Protestants; they were aroused from all parts and from every class, and prepared to defend the queen and resist their own enemies.

The duke was too good a general to lose time in operations. With far greater despatch than the poor conspirators of Amboise had used, he and his colleagues set out with a party of horse for the palace of Fontainebleau, and, arriving there before they were expected, informed the queen that they had come to carry the king away with them; but that she was at liberty either to come with them, or to go where she pleased.

In vain the foiled and disappointed Catharine tried every artifice to delay the time, in hope of succour arriving from Condé. An artful mind is almost always cowardly. Catharine feared, by resigning her son, to lose her own authority in the state, and, by accompanying him, to endanger her own life or liberty. Montmorency decided the case by ordering his party to horse, and the poor little king and his unhappy mother were conveyed to the fortress of Meulan, and, finally, for greater security, brought to Paris. Had the conspirators of Amboise been equally prompt, and, by one bold step, as successful, the fate of Protestantism in France would possibly have been different; and then different, too, might have been the history of that fine country—a

history which, for glory and for guilt, must be pre-eminent in that of nations. Those conspirators were unsuccessful, and suffered the doom of traitors. The achievement of Guise, though its object was the same, has been differently regarded. The former, however, designed to take young Francis II. from the hands of the Roman Catholics; the latter took young Charles IX. from the hands of the Protestants. The prince de Condé, and Coligny, who, when he saw open war had become inevitable, took the most prudent measures for carrying it on, brought a party of a thousand horse, to secure the queen and her royal son; but the promptitude of Guise had already gained the prize.

The condition of the Protestants of Paris was now deplorable; they were everywhere insulted and injured. The superstitious Montmorency did not consider it beneath his dignity to lead his soldiers to the suburbs of the city, where Protestant worship had been legally permitted, to force open the doors of places of worship, break the pulpits and benches; then, leaving these houses of prayer in flames behind him, re-enter Paris, and be cheered by the mob, who, says the witty Brantome, gave the general the title of captain Burn-Bench.

After a sanguinary conflict, Condé and Andelot got possession of Orléans. Civil war burst forth throughout France. Many of the principal towns were gained by the Huguenots, as the French Protestants were now universally named. Nismes, Montauban, Lyons, Bourges,

Valence, and Rouen, were all among the most important places of France. Orléans commanded the river Loire, and Rouen the Seine, two great channels of communication with Paris; and these were all possessed by them.

It is not intended to enter at large on the details of a war which bigotry and intolerance kindled. The horrors of a religious war are said to exceed those of all other wars; and in the tumult of evil passions, excited in civil contest, where personal, not national, enmities are indulged, who would think of looking for the spirit of Christianity, the spirit Christ breathed upon his disciples when he sent them out as lambs in the midst of wolves, to be attacked, but not to attack; to be slain, but not to slay? Admiral Coligny knew and felt the too probable influence of such a war on the troops engaged in it; and when some one praised their good order, he quietly answered, "It is a good thing while it lasts."

The Protestant army was naturally composed, in great part, of raw, undisciplined volunteers, such a multitude as rush to arms in the outbreak of a civil war, believing that a single conflict will secure to them the object for which they contend, and utterly unprepared for the patient, persevering struggle by which it is usually attained. Coligny's first object was to organize these troops, and to take measures for the maintenance of decency and decorum among them. All immorality and profaneness were strictly forbidden, and ministers

were appointed to each division of the army, for the performance of religious duties. The demoralizing and unchristianizing influence of war had not been felt when the following account was given of the Huguenot army:—“When this war first began, the chief captains in the Huguenot army still recollected the fine military order that prevailed in the wars of Francis I. and Henry, his son; with which remembrance the soldiers had the continual exhortations of their ministers, who admonished them not to use their arms for the oppression of the poor people. The zeal of religion was then strong in them, more especially in the nobility, so that, without constraint, each man held himself in subjection. If a crime were committed, the guilty were banished, or given over to justice; their companions would not intercede for them, so great was their detestation of wickedness and love of virtue. . . . Throughout this great multitude the name of God was never blasphemed; neither dice nor cards were in the camp; evening and morning, when the guards were changed, public prayers were made, and psalms were sung throughout the camp; a piety unusual to men accustomed to war.” We must hope that in many individuals the grace of God kept alive devotion in their hearts; but, in the mass, the Huguenot army did not continue undefiled by the corruption of war, and the rage of the worst of human passions.

Supplies neither of men nor of money were

sufficiently furnished to Coligny, to enable him or the prince to contend, with any hope of success, against a leader so formidable as Guise, who, making the young king do as he directed, appeared to the people to have the sanction of royal authority. To obtain money, without which no army can long be kept together, the ministers of the churches—of which, notwithstanding all the restrictions on public worship, there were at this time throughout France more than two thousand—levied contributions from their congregations. This, however, went but a little way, even with the exhortations of Beza, who had fled from Paris to Orléans, and attached himself to the prince. The Protestant leaders were thus led to pursue means far less creditable. The public treasures of all the places they got possession of were appropriated to their use ; but, besides this, the spoils of the national churches yielded them the supply they needed. With one exception, shortly to be noticed, these proceedings gained the Huguenots greater opprobrium than any other. The rich abbeys were plundered, and those treasures which the Roman Catholics regarded with devotion—silver crucifixes, images, richly-adorned shrines, all the treasures which a sacristy in former times possessed in gold and jewels—were turned into money for the use of the Protestants, and that, in general, with a degree of violence which deepened the offence. The finest churches were defaced, many of them were used as

stables, and the lead of the roofs was melted down for bullets. Exactly similar scenes were witnessed in the French revolution of 1789, but did not produce the same exasperated feeling in the population, though carried to a much greater extent, and attended by those disgusting circumstances of violating the tombs, and insulting, with idle mockery, the long-buried dead, which cannot be read of without horror. And yet the traveller who examines the monuments still remaining in France, of each of these devastations, must be struck by the fact, that the French, who show an averseness to allude to the latter, or will only briefly name them, as a misfortune incident to the time, will dwell upon the former with the long-perpetuated memory of ancient animosity. But, though neither Protestant zeal, nor needy rapacity, can excuse the Huguenot ravages, yet, compared with those which infidelity committed, they sink into nothing. Indeed, without even referring to them for a comparison, monarchs, who have been accounted by their church "good Christians," have not scrupled to make use of church treasures, as the shrine of St. Martin can witness, whose silver railing, presented by the curious devotion of the cruel Louis XI., was melted into current coin by Francis I.

Another obnoxious proceeding on the part of the Huguenot chiefs, was, inviting the English into France. The prince de Condé was commander-in-chief; Coligny was second in command, though first both in counsel and action.

Andelot was sent to Germany, to solicit succour from the Protestant princes, which he obtained. They then turned their hopes to England, where the Protestant queen Elizabeth, the foe to Spain and popery, would be likely to assist them. But Elizabeth, notwithstanding her Protestantism, would not give her help for nothing. Calais, the last remnant of England's great possessions in France, had been retaken by its lawful proprietors in her sister's reign. She stipulated for its return; and as a guarantee, obtained the right to garrison with her soldiers, the three principal keys to the French kingdom, on the side of England, Havre-de-Grâce, Rouen, and Dieppe. "Behold the fruits of the new religion!" cried a French author, indignant at this betrayal of a nation's interests: and for this act Condé obtained more disgrace and reproach than for any other. Even the history of England would prove that such a step might render his allies the conquerors of his country. To surrender such important towns to the possession of an enemy so formidable to France as England had ever been, was to excite, with justice, the popular indignation.

Condé and Coligny prepared for an attack on Paris, resolving to attempt to gain possession of the king's person. But while the Huguenot army marched from Orléans to Paris, the Roman Catholic army had set out from Paris to attack Orléans. A battle between the armies, which thus undesignedly encountered each other, was on the point of taking place, when

Catharine, anxious to prevent it, desired a conference with Condé, in hopes to negotiate.

An incident consequent to civil war, and very congenial to French temperaments, took place while the parties were conferring. Their escorts, posted at a stated distance, to prevent the danger of a conflict, had remained looking at each other. Brother was opposed to brother, in the persons of their chiefs, the king of Navarre and prince de Condé; many old friends and relatives were drawn up in these hostile ranks. The royal party wore crimson scarfs, and used crimson banners; the Huguenot army was distinguished by white. As they regarded each other, the feelings of nature prevailed, and instead of drawing their swords, as their commanders had feared, they rushed forward and embraced each other. Who can forbear to wish that such feelings had prevailed? that, agreeing to love as brethren, to be pitiful and merciful, they had suffered every man to use the freedom of mind with which God had endowed him, or employed only the weapons of Christian love, of reason, and knowledge, to lead them into the religious convictions into which no human mind can ever be forced!

In these conferences, Condé asked the queen whether, if the Protestants laid down their arms, they would be allowed the free exercise of their religion. To which Catharine, doubtless by previous agreement, replied, that "There could be no peace in France so long as any religion but that of Rome, which alone was suited to



its constitution, should be sought to be established; that the edict of January had been the source of these troubles, and must be abolished; and the Huguenots must satisfy themselves in the internal and private duties of their religion." Coligny answered that they had, therefore, to choose between death and exile.

A scene follows, from which the Protestant historian would willingly turn his eyes; but a partial historian is guilty of great error, and implants doubt, in wishing to strengthen belief. A Protestant traveller in France may open a guide-book, and be startled by the mention of Huguenot depredations, or by the notice of places unhappily signalized by "the ferocious baron des Adrets, and his Huguenot followers," and, having seen all this qualified or passed over by a Protestant writer, the cause of truth will suffer an injury; and because errors have been concealed, the virtues that have been recorded may be deemed exaggerated or untrue. The very name of religion, which has at first given a sanction to arms, is but seldom invoked in the use made of them. "The Huguenots took and plundered the town of Beaugency, behaving there," says a historian of the time, "as if a reward were offered to him who did the worst." Such, indeed, appeared now to be the contest on both sides, who should be the most cruel, most violent, and most unchristian. Such is war, and, above all, civil war. Such a rivalry may be said to have existed on the part of a Protestant and a

Roman Catholic general. Des Adrets on the former, and Montluc on the latter side, were rivals in barbarity. But des Adrets was the singular instance of such a commander among the Protestants, and he cannot fairly be denominated one of that party himself.

The barbarities of Montluc it can give no pleasure to enumerate ; indeed, time would fail to do so. The trees around some towns were heavy with the bodies hung upon them at his command. His own words, in the narrative written by himself of his personal memoirs, thus briefly describe his entrance into Toulouse, when it was taken from the Huguenots :—" We immediately began to do justice, and I never saw so many heads fly off their shoulders at once, as on that day." When that town, always famous for " heresy," was taken by the Roman Catholic army, the chief civil authorities proclaimed in the public places a command for all " good Catholics " and subjects to take arms against those of " the religion," and seize them, or slay them, without reserve or mercy. The massacre that ensued it is useless to dwell on. We shall only relate one instance of the barbarity of the ferocious des Adrets, and that on account of the anecdote which has given it celebrity, and caused it to be mentioned in most descriptions of France. He took prisoners the Roman Catholic garrison of Montbrison, and, by one of those inenuities of barbarism of which Montluc also was guilty, he amused himself by making these men be their own executioners, by leaping from the

tower of the cathedral. One of these soldiers having twice advanced to the edge of the height, twice stopped, and was going to run forward again. "How!" cried the brutal commander, "do you take twice to try the leap?" "Sir," said the soldier, readily, "I will give you ten times to do it." It was, perhaps, owing to a national love of wit and repartee, that des Adrets' pardon may be ascribed; for the soldier's wit saved his life.

It is consolatory to know, for the sake even of nominal Protestantism, that des Adrets forsook that church which glories in not being a persecuting one. "He returned sincerely to God and his king," says a priest of the church of Rome, in whose communion baron des Adrets died. In his old age his appearance is thus described:—"He was strong and robust, had a ferocious look, a face lean and bony, marked with spots of black blood; a sharp nose, and an aspect such as Sulla is represented with." "He brought up his sons," says Brantome, "to bathe in blood, and taught them to resemble himself." It was in Protestant blood they bathed. The son of the baron who had sought relief from a troubled conscience in the opiates which the church of Rome can afford, showed great zeal against the people for whom his father had fought, and died from remorse for killing so many Protestants on St. Bartholomew's day.

The duke of Guise besieged Rouen, where was an English as well as a Huguenot garrison. That count Montgomery, who killed Henry II.

commanded the place for the Protestants. After an obstinate resistance, it was taken by storm. The king's death was not universally believed to have been accidental, and Montgomery, who might have added to a contrary suspicion, by a junction with the Protestants, "had sworn to make his grave in the town sooner than surrender." He managed to leap into a boat, however, in which galley-slaves were employed, and escaped.

One of the orders issued by Guise on the taking of Rouen, was, to show no mercy to the English. On this occasion, one of the aged Calvinist ministers, who had attended Beza to the conference at Poissy, Marolatus, was hung in front of the cathedral. The Huguenots took the miserable vengeance of offering life for life, and hanged two presidents of the parliament.

At the siege of Rouen, Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, met his death. On the whole, his memory would have been differently regarded, had he fallen on the side of Protestantism. In his last hours, these principles appear to have gained the ascendancy. In the hour of suffering, and at the approach of death, he might call to mind the truths he had so impatiently heard from his pious wife. He had sent her from him; but it is wonderful what power the advance of death is seen to have in recalling those principles or affections, which may have been abandoned amid the temptations of life. Navarre had a Protestant minister to attend him, although a priest was brought by his

physician to administer the last sacraments of the Roman Catholic church. The celebrated Voltaire said that this monarch, "father of the firmest and most intrepid of men (Henry IV.) was the weakest and most undecided. He was so wavering in his religion, that it was never known in which he died. He bore arms against the Protestants whom he loved, fought for Catharine de' Medici who hated him, and for the Guises who oppressed him."

Brantome draws a rather ridiculous picture of his dying bed, attended by a Catholic and a Huguenot doctor, and listening to the minister of religion which either doctor recommended. But he asserts that this king died regretting his change of religion, and resolving, *if he recovered*, to help the Protestants, and that he sent such a message to his brother, the prince de Condé. How much do those words, "If he recovered," enforce that admonition of Scripture, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest!" Decision of character is preached throughout the Bible.

The death of the king of Navarre was not felt as a loss by the Roman Catholic party; it would have been lamented by the Protestant. His influence had ceased to be necessary to the former, and, though they had contended for him, they scarcely missed him. That party, under the victorious Guise, was now triumphant. Condé was becoming already embarrassed. Many of the great

towns which the Huguenots had possessed, were retaken; the fame of the duke rapidly advancing, and his aspirations to the throne of France being little doubted, Catharine began to think of tampering once more with the Protestants, as her only counterpoise to the power of the Guises, now that the king of Navarre was gone.

During an interval unavailingly employed in negotiation, since toleration, for which Protestants fought, would not be granted, the following scenes occurred, which are related by an eye-witness:—"You might see on either side parties conversing on the field, saluting and embracing each other, so that the German soldiers in the service of the prince de Condé, who did not understand our manners, began to murmur, thinking we were making friends with our enemies, and meant to betray them. But afterwards, when the truce was broken, seeing that the persons so ready to embrace, were equally ready to fight, they said, What fools these people are, who love each other to-day, and will kill each other to-morrow!" This was a scene in civil war; but even in a foreign one, the French soldiers in Spain, during the late war, would shake hands with their English enemies over the stream out of which they both drank. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" sin, and human passion, have broken the unity.

We will only detail the first open battle, and the most interesting of this war. Beza was

with the prince de Condé, and relates some curious particulars connected with it. "The purposes of God," he says, "were not to exterminate either army, but to punish one by means of the other; and therefore the great captains on both sides appear to have been deprived of common understanding. As to the prince, he did nothing which he ought to have done, whether his design had been to offer or to refuse a battle. And as for the Catholic leaders, they seem to have lost their senses to offer battle where they did. . . . . If they had allowed the prince to have gone on a little further, they might have destroyed his whole force with a third of their number."

Beza also relates some incidents to which, possibly, subsequent events gave importance. "I will relate two matters which seemed presages from God of what was approaching; having seen the first with my own eyes, and heard the second with my own ears. The first is, that, as the prince was crossing a river, an aged woman flung herself into the water which was deep, laid hold of his boot, and called out, 'Go on, prince; you will suffer much, but God will be with you.' To which the prince replied, 'My friend, pray to God for me.'" "The other," he adds, was, "that, in the evening, the prince being in bed, said to a minister who had been reading prayers, 'I know we shall have a battle to-morrow; we ought not to attend to dreams, yet I will tell you what I dreamed last night. It seemed to me that I

had given battle three times, obtaining the victory finally; and that I saw our three enemies dead, I myself having got my death-wound. I desired the three bodies to be laid on a table, and mine on the top of all, and thus gave up my soul to God.' . . . Strange to say, this dream was confirmed by the future; for the next day St. André, one of the three enemies, was killed; then, not long after, the duke of Guise; then the constable Montmorency; and, after the third battle, the prince himself." In one respect, however, the dream did not come true. The poor prince did not die a victor. Marshal St. André, it would appear, had his forebodings also; such is frequently the case. As he was going to horse, he chanced to hear that the duke had heard mass, and taken the sacrament before he breakfasted. "Ah!" he said, "how unhappy for me not to have done the same, and better prepared myself for what may befall me this day!"

Montmorency, though suffering severe pain and illness, went to battle against the heretics with a better courage. Brantome says, that every one rejoiced to see that fine old man show so resolute a countenance, though he had risen from a sick bed. He appeared in complete armour, and, when asked by Guise how he found himself, cheerfully answered, "The medicine which cures me is the coming battle, which is for the honour of God and the king." So strangely can the human mind deceive itself. But let us judge gently of one



another. Had such a speech been made on our side, we should probably applaud it. In this confident and rejoicing spirit, the constable attacked Condé's division of the Protestant army, and was completely beaten. It was Montmorency's first open engagement with the detested Huguenots, and we can imagine better than describe how filled with rage and confusion such a mind would be at such a result. Though weighed down with age and sickness, he made the most desperate efforts to rally his troops, but in vain; he was struck from his horse, wounded, and taken prisoner.

The prince de Condé considered the victory to be his. Many of the first gentlemen and nobility of France were killed, or taken prisoners. A prematurely claimed victory is always dangerous. The undisciplined Huguenots ran shouting over the field; order was abandoned; the flying troops of Montmorency were wildly pursued; pillage and triumph were all that were thought of. News of a victory, which the Protestants fondly deemed decisive of their fate, was despatched to Paris. Catharine de' Medici heard the tidings of the overthrow of her army, and the victory of the Protestants, and, in her characteristic manner, remarked: "Well, then, we must all pray to God in French!"\*

The cautious, clear-sighted admiral Coligny did not share the general elation; neither was

\* It will be remembered, that the Protestants were prohibited from praying in French; the prayers of the church of Rome being in Latin. To pray in French, then, meant to be Protestant.

he so quickly deceived as the prince. He beheld with uneasiness the disorder of the troops, the too eager pursuit, and the avidity of spoil, which, among other evils, had crept into the army that had at first been impressed with better feelings. He perceived that Guise had kept the reserved corps still unengaged; but having looked on at the defeat and slaughter of his companions in arms, the general belief was that he would not engage at all. Posted on a hill, that veteran general beheld with coolness the confusion and defeat of his army, but watched, with perfect self-possession, for the moment when the exultation of a first actual victory in pitched battle should have elated to the wildest degree of incaution his opponent, and the soldiers he commanded; with difficulty restraining the rising fury of his men, and the despair of Montmorency's son, who saw his aged father beaten down, wounded, and taken, without being allowed by Guise to bring him succour.

Coligny alone appeared to penetrate the design of Guise, and observed to some companion, "That cloud will soon break over us." It was as he said. Brantome, who was attached to the army, gives the following graphic account of his patron's conduct:—"The duke beheld the game of battle played and lost, the confusion and flight of our soldiers, and the disorderly pursuit of the Huguenots. . . . He looked around on all sides; commanded us to open our ranks, and passed to the front; still

looking about him leisurely, and rising in his stirrups, though he was of a grand and noble stature. Suddenly, knowing the time was come, he casts one quick look around, and cries aloud, 'Come on, comrades, all is ours!' and, in the twinkling of an eye, dashing the spurs into his horse, he joined St. André, and came down like a thunderbolt on the field of battle."

The tide of victory was soon turned; the disorder of the Protestant army was irretrievable. Condé, distracted with this reverse, made a desperate struggle, but was forced to retire, closely pursued, and still combating with the son of Montmorency, who was anxious to save his father. The prince's horse was shot. He fell to the ground, and was taken prisoner by Montmorency's son, while Montmorency himself remained a prisoner to the lately victorious prince. At the same time marshal St. André, another of the triumvirs, was killed in an engagement with some troops which Coligny had collected, and led against Guise. St. André was at first taken prisoner, but instantly shot by a Huguenot who owed him some personal enmity.

So ended this battle, which, it is said, is the most memorable in the civil wars, "whether we consider the experienced chiefs then present, or the obstinacy with which the field was disputed; and which, in every point of view, is worthy of all lamentation on account of the blood with which so many gentlemen of France bathed the earth." Andelot was reported at first to have been among the slain; but Coligny, as

soon as he saw the battle was lost, had sent him off with as many men as he could collect together to guard Orléans, knowing that the triumphant duke would direct his steps to that city.

In his reception and treatment of his prisoner, the prince de Condé, Guise showed all the urbanity and generosity for which he had been celebrated before the spirit of bigotry affected his conduct. He received him with respect and honour, led him to his own quarters, and entertained him in the best way he could. The baggage had been plundered, and few beds were to be had ; Guise offered his to the prince, who accepted it only on condition that the duke would consent to share it. Thus these two great rivals and adversaries "lay down together as if they had been good friends and cousin-germans, which they ought to have been."

Catharine showed as little exultation on hearing of the victory of Guise, as she had expressed grief on hearing of that of Condé. The immense popularity acquired by the duke was, to her view, enough to counterbalance the national triumph over the Protestants. Alas ! that a nation's triumph should be so procured !

Ruin threatened the cause of Protestantism in France, but the brave Coligny did not yet despair. He took the command of the army in place of the captive prince. Andelot, "a knight without fear," defended Orléans, which Guise closely besieged. Coligny, who was posted in the neighbourhood, was obliged to

remain inactive ; the garrison made many sallies on the besiegers, by which the latter lost many men, and Andelot sent his brother word that he would keep the duke before the walls for at least three months. Coligny, therefore, marched into Normandy to receive supplies expected from England. But the hopes of Andelot were unfounded, and his brother received advice of the momentarily expected capture of Orléans. As Andelot, if taken, would, in all probability, be executed as a traitor, Coligny was in great distress. He took the town of Caen, and made prisoner the brother of Guise, whom he kept as security for his own brother.

The queen, by the advice of marshal de Brissac, urged Guise to raise the siege of Orléans, follow Coligny into Normandy, destroy his army, and “drive the English into the sea.” The duke replied, that the day was fixed for the assault of Orléans, when he would undoubtedly capture it, and “he hoped her majesty would not take it amiss, if he left no living thing within its walls, but slew even the dogs and cats, battered the town to the ground, and sowed its foundations with salt.” Such is the language ascribed to him ; but as Montmorency was a prisoner in Orléans, attended by his niece, the princess de Condé, the gallant duke must have made *one* exception, at least, from all “the living things” that fated city contained. But his letter was of such a description, that the cold-hearted Catharine could observe, “To-

morrow, monsieur de Guise will cause a fine panic in Orléans." Such was certainly to be the case in the opinion of those who knew not what a day might bring forth, and talked of to-morrow as if its events were as well known to them as those of yesterday.

The case of Orléans was, indeed, hopeless, and there was no Jeanne d'Arc this time to deliver it. But a less noble deliverer was at hand, a less glorious succour arrived. On the evening preceding that memorable "to-morrow," the duke of Guise was riding to his quarters in the dark, from the trenches where he had been examining the works. A white plume in his hat distinguished him in the gloom, and afforded a mark for the murderer, who, screened by a hedge, took his deadly aim as the duke passed him. Three pistol-balls struck him. Guise bent to the saddle-bow, but instantly raising himself, said, "This was to be expected; but I think it will be nothing."

He was conveyed to his quarters; the wound, at first not considered dangerous, was probably rendered mortal by the surgery practised at the time. It was cauterised with hot iron, to destroy the effects of poison, in case the balls had been poisoned; and other barbarous measures were resorted to. Aware of his approaching death, he met it with calmness. "Finding himself," says Beza, "surprised by death in such a splendid career of greatness, he would willingly have lived longer, but surmounted that desire in his last hours. He acknowledged something

of his wrongs against those of the 'religion,' and spoke affectionately to his family."

It is said that Guise accused himself of having caused too much blood to be shed in France; and, on his dying bed, denied, even with anxiety to be believed, that he had caused, or sanctioned, the massacre at Vassy; the recollection of which, it thus appears, would return to him, although we may conclude that the priests who ministered to him would not recall it. The bishop who attended his last hours wrote an account of his death, and asserts that the dying duke said to those around his bed, "I beg you will believe that the misfortune which happened at Vassy occurred against my wishes. I was the defender, and not the aggressor." The power of death is great! Truth at that hour regains her sway. The just will be just still, and the holy will be holy still; but the unjust and the unholy will never wish to continue so. Guise, who, in his late years, seemed only to live for the exercise of his power, and the extermination of heretics, then also changed his sentiments, and, in his last advice to Catharine, recommended mild and tolerant measures.

"He was," says a French author, "the greatest man our age produced, and every way worthy of praise, whether we regard his military skill and success, or his extreme prudence in the conduct of affairs. Truly it would appear that he was designed for the ornament and good of France, had he fallen on

better times. But the kingdom being divided into parties, he being a man of lofty mind, overstepped the duty of a subject, at the persuasion of his brother, the cardinal, and when he had legitimately no supreme command in army or state, he made use of his personal qualities, splendid talents, and universal popularity, to force himself into the highest authority." If there had been no cardinal of Lorraine, it is tolerably certain that the name of the celebrated duke of Guise would have come down to posterity divested of much of that odium which must attach to the character of a violent and unrelenting religious persecutor. It was the pride, intolerance, and ambition of these two men which caused the chief part of the miseries of their country. Guise was not a man of education; his life was devoted to arms, and not to learning: the reverse was the case with his brother, the cardinal. It was natural that, in all religious questions, he should be guided by the opinions of the theologian, his own consisting in nothing more than obedience to the church, whose power, wealth, and greatness it was the interest of his family to support.

The story related by Beza of his mistake about the Bible, at Vassy, might be amusing under other circumstances. "While they," the followers of the duke, "were pillaging and defacing the chapel, a Bible, used in the service, was brought to the duke, who, holding it in his hand, said to the cardinal, 'Look here, brother, this is one of the accursed Huguenot's books.' The cardinal looked at it, and an-



swered, "There is not much harm in that; it is the Holy Scripture." The duke, not understanding this, went into a greater fury than before. "How!" he cried, "the Holy Scripture! Why, it is more than fifteen hundred years since the death and passion of Jesus Christ, and it is only one since this book was printed! Do you call that the Holy Scripture?"

The Huguenot leaders, especially Coligny, were accused of engaging an assassin to murder the duke of Guise. The suspicion was natural, and there might have appeared grounds for an accusation which has never, in any way, been proved, though the charge has never been wholly withdrawn. Poltrot, the assassin, took the basest means of delivering the Protestants, and the people of Orléans, from their formidable foe. He came to Coligny's army with the declared intention of seeking out Guise in battle, and killing him on the open field of war, a declaration which Coligny did not deny having received. But when the admiral led his troops from the vicinity of Orléans, he introduced himself to the camp of Guise, and told the duke he abjured the errors of Protestantism, and wished to return to the old religion, and to the service of the king.

Guise received him kindly; his appearance was prepossessing, and his family of some distinction. He ordered an apartment to be prepared for the young man, and invited him to dine with him. By this gross treachery, the deed was accomplished, which left a re-

proach, without really conferring any great or lasting benefit on the cause of the Protestants. Coligny was indignant at the charge brought against him, and wrote to the queen to clear himself, offering to go and confront the wretched assassin, (who was frightfully tortured to obtain confession,) provided his own safety would be guaranteed; but this was not accorded.

The death of Guise caused an instant revolution in the aspect of Protestant affairs. Orléans was saved; the words of Catharine de' Medici were not verified—the “TO-MORROW” was passed in safety.

The captivity, meantime, of the prince de Condé had not proved beneficial to his moral interests. A disposition too much inclined to pleasure, had been worked upon by the arts of the queen, and those of the brilliant and beautiful ladies she assembled at her court. This rendered him more desirous of peace; and he yielded to terms which were considered to betray the Protestant interests, at the very moment when the loss of their great defender might have made the Roman Catholic party more willing to make some tolerating concessions. The liberty of worship, for which they and Coligny had fought, was rather restricted than increased by the treaty of peace. But the prince and all his adherents were declared faithful subjects, as having taken up arms “with good and pure intentions;” consequently no punishments were to take place.

This treaty stipulated that Roman Catholics

and Huguenots should unite their arms to expel the English from France, who had been invited thither by the latter. This they did most warmly, to the great surprise of our queen Elizabeth, who saw her armies beaten by her allies. So eager were Frenchmen to wipe out the disgrace of having brought English garrisons into France, that the Huguenots fought with greater zeal against their Protestant auxiliaries than they had shown against their Roman Catholic adversaries. The prince de Condé offered himself to expel them from Havre, which town was forced to capitulate, though the following morning earl Warwick, the governor, who had just surrendered, saw the English fleet appearing with supplies and help.

The polite message of the French commander to the English admiral is worthy of repetition. He sent to inform him that Havre was then in the possession of the king of France, but if he wished to land for refreshment, the queen would be happy to entertain him; for, as his majesty had recovered what belonged to him, he had no intention to quarrel further with the queen of England. When Elizabeth's anger had subsided, she said the king of France was happy in having such faithful subjects.

Coligny was extremely displeased with the terms Condé had made for the Protestants. In his letter to Catharine, clearing himself from all knowledge of the murder of the duke of Guise, he had used a degree of candour which a treacherous and guilty man would fear

to utter. "Do not suppose," he said, "that I feel any regret for the death of Guise. I consider it the best thing that could have happened for the kingdom, for the church of God, and my own family."

All the advantages, however, which might have arisen from the removal of Guise were lost to the Protestants by the precipitation of Condé. The admiral told him his pen had destroyed more churches, in signing that treaty, than their enemies would have done in a long war. By restricting the number of places of worship, he said, the poor people, who had fought as well as the nobility for their liberty, were left exposed to the danger of returning again to the superstitions of Rome, or of living without any religion; for it could not be expected that working men, old people, and women, could travel, weekly, twenty or thirty miles to find a place of worship. And what security for its faithful performance could exist, if its assemblies were only held in the castles of the Protestant nobles? The religion of the people would be subject to the caprice of the nobility; and if estates should pass into the hands of Roman Catholics, what might become of the church? Calvin and Beza, with many other ministers, seconded these complaints, telling Condé he would be the first to lament his want of firmness; which, indeed, was soon the case. The treaty was signed, and could not be revoked. Peace once more was restored; the horrors of a civil and religious war subsided—alas! to be soon renewed!

## CHAPTER VIII.

CHARLES IX.

PART III.

THE removal of the powerful and ambitious Guise left to Catharine de' Medici the undivided authority for which she thirsted, to the desire for which every other passion was subservient. Her son, under her training, promised to be worthy of such a mother. It was not, perhaps, in her power to make him great, for her own nature possessed no real greatness; but she is allowed to have done what she could to make him wicked.

Whatever good qualities the unhappy boy might have naturally possessed were annihilated or corrupted, not under her influence alone, but under that also of his governor and chief friend, marshal De Retz, who was one of the very worst characters that, or any other age, could produce. One of the accomplishments the youthful monarch acquired from him was that of swearing. "At court," says Brantome, "we held him to be the greatest blasphemer that ever was heard; so that the king learned this vice, and became so habituated to it, that this horrid speech and blas-

phemy seemed to him a mere form of discourse, which was more gallant and brave than sinful. For which cause he made no difficulty in breaking his word whenever it came into his head to do so. . . . In fine weather, he was always in action, out of doors; for he hated being in the house, and called a house the grave of the living." Charles ix., who is to be pitied as living thus from childhood, the victim of wicked people, had a rough and violent temper, which was stimulated, rather than controlled, by the evil guardians of his education.

In the year 1563, the famous council of Trent, so often appealed to as an exponent of the sentiments of the church of Rome, touching the Protestants, closed its sittings. This council, which was convened with a view to procure that church-reform for which all men saw the necessity, save those whose interests were opposed to it, only tended to ratify the errors that ought to have been corrected. Cardinal Lorraine appeared there in all the pomp for which his proud family were celebrated. Opportunity was there afforded for consulting on the state of France; and the entire extermination of heresy was afterwards pressed for by the ambassadors sent to Charles, by the pope, the king of Spain, and the duke of Savoy.

Catharine, fearing a renewal of the war, and probably the chancellor also, made Charles answer in the evasive manner of a statesman, that "he would live in the religion of his ancestors, and was disposed to render justice to all his sub-

jects." The efforts of bigotry, however, and of really mistaken as well as unjust policy, did not cease. Persecution in varied forms still continued. The pope's nuncio at Paris, wrote to cardinal Borromeo: "In a short time we shall have no Huguenots in France: every one acknowledges how much we are indebted to the good counsels of your eminence."

The queen took the young monarch on a tour through his kingdom; this tour was made with all the show and splendour usual on such occasions. Unhappily, the spectacle of ravages committed by the Huguenots on churches, wherein they themselves had once been worshippers, on monasteries and works of art, which fell before a ruthless and ignorant fury, greatly tended to excite his violent disposition, and to deepen the bitter feelings that had already been implanted against his Protestant subjects. The others hailed him with cries of "Long live the king, the queen, and the mass!"

In this royal progress, the crafty queen is believed to have taken measures for the complete annihilation of Protestantism. At Bayonne, on the frontier of Spain, Charles met his unhappy sister, the queen of Spain; and there their mother conferred with the duke of Alva, whose name is so terrible in the annals of oppression, both of Protestantism and liberty. They used to meet in a private gallery at night to hold these consultations, which we may conclude were well suited to the hour that was chosen for them.

From Bayonne the king went to Navarre, to visit the queen, his relative. Wherever he had power he restored the Roman Catholic worship and churches; but Jeanne would not allow him to interfere in her dominions. He tried urgently to get her to do so, but without success.

An embassy subsequently waited upon him from the Protestant princes in Germany, soliciting justice, protection, and full religious liberty for the Huguenots. Charles, young as he was, is said to have been so angry at the demand, that, to avoid breaking out in unseemly expressions, he was obliged to keep silence for some minutes. He was, however, remarkable for receiving ambassadors with an air of dignity and grace, very unusual to him on common occasions; and when he had gained sufficient self-command, he made a spirited reply, which showed he had forgotten his own urgency with the queen of Navarre. He told the deputies that he was willing to be on good terms with their masters, provided they would interfere as little with his government as he did with theirs; adding, "I am, however, greatly inclined to beg of them to allow the mass and Catholic preachers in their towns."

The king caused a band of confederated Roman Catholics to be formed, which was called by the strange title of "The Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit." Each member was sworn not to divulge the purpose of the association, and this, with other more alarming appearances, made the Protestants justly uneasy, as they



concluded this secret purpose was against them.

Two attempts had been made by assassination against the life of Coligny, as well as the open and public one, headed by the duchess of Guise, who, in deep mourning, knelt at the king's feet, imploring justice upon him as her husband's murderer. But Charles received him with favour, and he met with the greatest honour at court. Notwithstanding, the sage admiral, undazzled by the pleasures that seduced Condé, saw the dangers that menaced his party, and warned the prince to prepare for them.

This admired and unfortunate prince had fallen an easy prey to the snares of a treacherous and ungodly court. He was led away by its sinful pleasures: Catharine contrived it should be so. His wife died, afflicted by the thoughtless conduct of one who, in the hour of trial and prospect of a violent death, had shown much magnanimity of spirit and great tenderness of feeling for her. But Condé, like many men of a similar temperament, could resist the fear of death more firmly than the love of pleasure. Two of the most beautiful and wealthy ladies of the court tried to rival each other in his affections, and gifts and favours were showered upon him. The hour of trial was at hand.

Oppression on one side, resistance and complaints on the other, disturbed the tranquillity of the country, and injured the spiritual interests of the reformed church. "These things," says a Roman Catholic writer, "so

changed and heated the mind of the king, whose hatred against those who opposed his will increased with his years, that he was night and day in secret council with his mother, to find out some means of uprooting the evil. . . . The queen exhorted him to dissimulation and to patience, as did the cardinal Lorraine; . . . for though they rejoiced at this change of feeling, yet did they wish it to be concealed until the right time came. But there being no end to the suspicions of the Huguenots, and to the bloody dissensions of the people, and the prince and admiral now frequenting, and now quitting the court, always bringing thither new complaints and solicitations, the king could bear it no longer, and it was resolved now to aid art by force, and restrain the license of the discontented." From such a version of the case we can clearly judge what the reality was.

One of the severest trials to the Protestants at this period, arose from a command issued by government, for all monks and nuns who had embraced the reformed religion, to return to their convents, and, of course, recant their profession of faith. Many of the clergy who had become Protestants, had married, and were now called on to divorce their wives. In their churches, too, they had celebrated the reformed service; but now these places of worship returned to the church to which they had belonged. Besides all this, came private reasons of dissatisfaction. The ambition of Condé, which his own enemies, and the enemies of his cause,

affirmed to aspire even to the throne, had been flattered by Catharine, who promised him the important office of lieutenant-general of the kingdom: but her partiality, or policy, now caused her to bestow it on her favourite son, the brilliant and handsome duke of Anjou, afterwards Henry III., then only sixteen years of age. And to arouse still more the high spirit of the prince de Condé, the royal youth was allowed, or incited, to insult the experienced general, by asking Condé how he had the presumption to aspire to such a charge, and threatening to "make him as little as he wished to be great."

A peace so ill maintained, both politically and religiously, was not likely to continue. The Protestants once more took arms. In the sight of a multitude assembled on the heights adjoining Paris, the battle of St. Denis was fought between these fellow-countrymen. The Huguenots, headed by the prince de Condé, fought so furiously, that the Turkish ambassador, who was among the crowds of spectators, exclaimed, that, with their aid, his master would soon conquer the world. They fought desperately, for they fought for all that is dear to men, and fought for almost their last hope.

Old Montmorency, at the battle of St. Denis, performed his last exploit against "the heretics," and died, as he declared he was ready to do, fighting against them, though they were commanded by his own nephews, men whose spirit, character, and abilities, he must have

admired. As Guise was gone, he commanded the royal, or Roman Catholic army; it was the first battle he ever won, and the last he ever fought. He had been four times wounded, and was still engaged, when Robert Stuart (who was accused and tortured on suspicion of shooting the unjust judge of Dubourg) rode up and presented a pistol at him. Montmorency, seeing his aim, called out, "I am the constable." "And, therefore," said Stuart, "I present you with this," and fired on the old general. Montmorency's friends took him alive from among the dead and dying. He did not wish to be removed, saying, he could not die upon a better field, for which death he thanked God.

His religion consisted rather in sentiments of loyalty, and attachment to old institutions, than to anything else. Thus, when a monk came to confess him, and prepare him for death, after the manner of the Romish observances, the old man petulantly said, "Leave me, father—leave me; I have not lived in honour for seventy-seven years, without having learned to die for a quarter of an hour."

Montmorency had promised the people of Paris that they should see him return either dead or victorious. They saw him in both respects. But the king's victory was dearly bought. The prince de Condé might now remember his dream before the battle of Dreux. The "three enemies" were dead—Guise, St. André, and Montmorency; names that held a high place in the history of their time. He might now recol-

lect the prediction of his dream, that his own body was laid upon theirs!

The fearful spirit engendered by civil war was shortly afterwards shown at Nismes, where the Huguenots massacred a number of their cruel persecutors. This crime was committed by those who professed to have dissented from the church of Rome, and protested against its errors, and who, therefore, should have shown a better spirit than their adversaries. But it was true then as it is now, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel;" not all are of the spirit of Christ who are called Christians. The Huguenots followed the example set them, and took vengeance into their own hands. Yet these scenes, and this bloody battle, might have been prevented, if the reasonable demands of Condé, on behalf of the Protestants, had been granted.

In a previous conference with Montmorency, the prince had demanded "permission to exercise publicly the worship of the reformed religion." Montmorency replied, that the king had never intended the privileges he granted the Huguenots to continue, but was resolved to have only one religion in France. Such had before been the answer of queen Catharine.

At the battle of St. Denis, cardinal Chatillon, the brother of Coligny and Andelot, fought in the Huguenot army; and Brantome asserts that the former, the cardinal, "did very well, and fought very valiantly." He afterwards escaped into England, disguised as a sailor, and was

more usefully and suitably employed in negotiation, than he had been in the field of battle.

A short peace was concluded, and quickly broken. The Protestants rallied from all parts, took possession of the sea-port of Rochelle, and fortified it. The queen of Navarre and her son, the prince de Bearn, who had been in danger of being seized and carried off to Spain, joined the troop within the walls, and Rochelle was made the Protestant stronghold.

Pope Pius v., whom Rome canonized for his labours against heresy, wrote thus to Charles ix. :—"We pray Almighty God, who is the Lord of hosts . . . mercifully to grant your majesty the victory over our common enemies. When God shall have given, as we trust, the victory to your majesty, it will then be for you to punish, with the utmost rigour, the heretics and their leaders, because they are the enemies of God, and you must avenge on them, not your own injuries only, but the injuries of Almighty God." Thus encouraged by the head of his church, is it wonderful that Charles overstepped the boundaries, even of such a conscience as his, on St. Bartholomew's day?

The young duke of Anjou, the king's next brother, signalized himself in the command of the royal army, as lieutenant-general of France. The gallant Condé was surprised and forced into a battle for which he was every way quite unprepared. It was his last. He had been wounded previously in the arm, and, when joining battle, was further disabled by a kick

from the horse of his friend, the count Roche foucault. Perhaps it was a foreboding of the issue of this engagement which led him to call on his friends and followers to "remember the state in which Louis of Bourbon went into battle for his religion and his country." As he said the words, he stooped forward in his saddle, and rushed onward at the head of a brave, but devoted, little band, which combated, until crushed by superior numbers. It is said that an old Huguenot fell, with twenty-five grandsons, on one heap of slain.

Condé was struck from his horse, and obliged to surrender his sword; two gentlemen led the brave prince away, a prisoner of war, and seated him, exhausted and faint, beneath a hedge. There, while courteously conversing with some officers, the captain of the duke of Anjou's Swiss guards galloped past, and returning, asked who the prisoner was. They answered it was the prince de Condé. "Kill—kill—for the love of God!" was the brutal reply, and he drew a pistol from his belt. The unfortunate prince, seeing his coming fate, bent forward, screening his face with his hand, and the savage shot him through the head.

Thus ignominiously died the brave and admired prince de Condé. The body of the man, to be whose wife the most beautiful and proudest of the ladies of the court had contended, was thrown over an ass, and led through the royal army, before the eyes of the people, who had both admired and feared him. The young

prince de Bearn afterwards received, and buried it in the tomb of his fathers.

A few days before Condé's death, some remark which he accidentally made, called forth this admonition from a pure-hearted Protestant. "Sir, it appears to me, from your observations, that you are more influenced by ambition than religion; if such be the case, I quit you. Let us join for the service of God, or I must retire." The prince was able to satisfy the expostulator; but, if ambition were indeed the spring that actuated him, behold where it stopped! From a history so full of interest, a profitable lesson may be gained: it carries its own moral, without any comments.

"Thus died Louis de Bourbon Condé," says a Roman Catholic historian, "a prince of the blood royal, more illustrious for his warlike courage, and great virtues, than for his splendid birth. Valour, constancy, wit, address, sagacity, politeness, elegance, and liberality, were all united in him."

The duke of Anjou had begun this bloody day by receiving the sacrament "with all the princes and captains of his host." At the age of sixteen years, we do not expect to find a general with a world-hardened heart; yet, this youth, after having looked at the body of his relative borne on an ass through his camp, wished to erect a chapel of thanksgiving on the spot where he had been murdered! Some friends, however, represented to his immature experience, that, by doing so, he might only erect a monument of his own infamy.



At this battle, Robert Stuart was taken prisoner, and shot, for the death of Montmorency. "Men of bloods and deceit shall not live out half their days."—(Marg. reading.)

After the fall of Condé, admiral Coligny caused the young prince de Bearn, son of the late king of Navarre, to be appointed to the chief command of the Protestant army. This young prince was only sixteen, and his colleague, the young Condé, son of the late prince, was not quite so much. The former, however, already gave evidence of the talents which distinguished him as Henry of Navarre, and afterwards as Henry IV. of France. Thus both armies were ostensibly commanded by generals of sixteen years old.

Notwithstanding the exhortations of the pope to the contrary, who urged a continuance of war until heresy should be exterminated, a peace on very favourable terms was granted to the Protestants in the month of August, 1570. France had been desolated by civil war; the state was weary of it; and the people were ruined by it. Still, the Protestants, made suspicious by a long course of treachery and falsehood, apprehended danger even from the favour they met. There is reason to fear their suspicions were not unfounded. Certainly the conduct of the king, now about twenty-two years of age, to the leaders of the Protestants, who expected to be regarded only as traitors and rebels, was calculated to convey suspicions of insincerity. Before this time, one of those leaders, the good Andelot, had gone to rest,

not killed in battle, but carried off by illness. His brother, the admiral, writing to their children, who lived together at Rochelle, and were educated by one tutor, after proposing his brother as their example, and speaking of his virtues, says to them, "Now be assured that his reputation was not acquired by sloth or idleness, but by the great labours he endured for his country. Truly I never knew a man more righteous, or more devoted to piety. . . . I humbly pray our Lord God to give me grace to quit this life, as happily and piously as I saw him leave it. Regretting him as I do, I ask you to temper my grief by showing his virtues reviving in you; and that for this end you will give your whole hearts to religion, and employ your time in the study of letters. Take care in your amusements to do nothing that can in any way offend God. Let me hear good intelligence that you increase in piety and virtue, as in years and strength."

The most continual and pressing solicitations at last brought the admiral to the court of Charles ix. His reception cannot allow us to believe otherwise than that the young king, like his colder-blooded mother, was a most treacherous character. When Coligny knelt to Charles, he raised the venerable admiral, saluted him as "his father," and expressed a most extraordinary degree of joy, saying, that moment was the happiest of his life. "I hold you!" he cried—"Yes, I hold you now, and you shall leave me no more." But while such language, on first

meeting a man he must have long regarded as an enemy, bears, legibly, the stamp of insincerity, it is generally believed that this unhappy young king really did become considerably attached to Coligny; that he admired and respected him; and, finally, only yielded to his mother's hatred against, and to his own irritation at, the admiral's continued solicitations on behalf of the Protestants, and at his urgency with him to undertake a war in the Netherlands against the bigoted tyrant Philip of Spain.

Although remarkable for caution, the admiral, in all his intercourse with Charles ix., appears to have acted with the incaution of a good and sincere person, who believes that disinterested advice will be well received by one younger and less experienced. Coligny knew that Catharine was a dangerous character, but appears to have acted as if he never thought she could be dangerous to him. He believed that she exercised a most pernicious influence over her son; and, if he did not tell the king so,\* he is admitted to have advised him to take the supreme authority into his own hands. But, in giving this advice, did he forget, or did he disregard, the fact, that that son had been for twenty-two years habituated to the influence which he wished him, for the interests of his people, to shake off? The advice was well

\* The frequent and private conversations of the young king with the admiral, excited the jealousy of his vigilant mother. Having once tauntingly asked him what he learned from admiral Coligny, Charles, thrown into anger, replied, that he learned that his mother was his real enemy,

received at the time; but amongst relations, influences so long established cannot easily be set aside; and he who attempts to interfere with them, however noble himself, or however good his counsel, is very likely to fall a sacrifice to his zeal.

Notwithstanding the constant, and even vehement, pressing of the admiral, the king forbore to undertake, with his Protestant troops, the conquest of Flanders, recently subjugated by the king of Spain. Coligny was not aware, or did not care to remark, that Catharine was totally opposed to his wishes, and anxious to circumvent them. Neither did he understand the character of the young king, in whom, it would appear, he really was interested. He saw some good, and, making allowances for an evil education, he probably imagined much more.

That Catharine had her own designs, whether at first her wretched son participated in them or not, is well known. The chief Protestants of France were induced to come to Paris, and were received at court with so much favour as to make some of them suspicious. One ostensible cause of this resort to the capital, was the marriage of the young prince de Bearn, the late commander-in-chief of the Huguenot army, with the princess Margaret, the sister of Charles ix., who would much have preferred marrying the young duke de Guise. The pope opposed this marriage, as the prince was a Protestant; but Charles said his sister would convert

him ; the pope, on the contrary, said he feared the conversion might be on the other side.

Margaret, however, had been a firm Roman Catholic in her childhood. She has already been mentioned as one of the few "good Catholics" of the royal palace, while her time-serving mother encouraged the Protestant faith. The proof of her steadfastness is derived from her own personal memoirs. Margaret, unlike her great-aunt of the same name, the sister of Francis I., who also became queen of Navarre, thus writes of her resistance to Protestantism when not eight years old :—" I made great efforts to keep my religion, while the whole court was infected with heresy ; notwithstanding the persuasions of many ladies and gentlemen, and of my brother, Anjou, whose childhood had not escaped the influence of that evil Huguenoterie. He persecuted me to change my religion, throwing my books into the fire, and making me take the Huguenot psalms and prayers instead, which I brought to my governess, a good-Catholic, whom it pleased God to preserve to me. She often took me to that excellent man, cardinal Tournon, who exhorted me to suffer all things for my religion, and would give me other books in the place of those my brother burned. But others would blame me, and say, that all who had any sense, after having heard Christ once preached, turned from my bigoted religion. My brother sometimes would add threats, and tell me that the queen, my mother, would have me whipped."

Yet seldom has there been a more licentious and ungodly woman than this stedfast little girl grew up to be. Truly history "teaches by example." This young Anjou, who persecuted his little sister to become a Protestant, possessed no religion himself, having fallen in merely with what was for the moment fashionable at court. We have seen him at the age of sixteen, the general of the army against the Protestants; he took a chief part in the Protestant murders about to be recorded, and was himself, when king of France, assassinated by a Romish monk, as an enemy of the Roman Catholic league. Such is human consistency, when the gospel and grace of God do not impart knowledge and power to order our steps after his word.

The marriage of the Protestant prince, and late general of their army, with the sister of the king, afforded a reason for assembling the chief families of the Protestant religion at Paris.

The princess Margaret, who felt only indifference, or dislike, to the husband chosen for her, and detested his religion, would not reply to the question, which demanded if she would take him for her husband. The king, her brother, made her bend her head, and the movement was taken for an assent. The usual fêtes and rejoicings followed. In the midst of these, Coligny, who was in high favour with the king, and with whom the king, in return, was in favour also, brought to him some petitions from his Protestant brethren,

Charles answered, "My father, give me four or five days to enjoy myself, and then, on the faith of a king, I pledge myself that you and all those of your religion shall be satisfied."

For the space of two years, the professions of the king's attachment to Coligny had now continued. Most persons consider it probable that he really had been impressed by the grave sincerity and deep piety of the admiral's character—qualities so foreign to this court, so little known to himself,—but that the constant importunities of Protestantism, his own vicious principles, and the evil ascendancy his mother had over him, rendered him at last both a partner in her plot, and a victim to her cruelty. We can, however, find no ground for excusing Charles ix., except by believing him the mind-enfeebled slave of a domineering parent, or the victim of a perverted conscience. Two days after the royal promise given to Coligny, as just related, that venerable man was shot in the street, as he came, reading, from the palace of the Louvre, towards his house. The wound was not mortal, and the assassin, instantly mounting a fleet horse, belonging to the royal stables, that was kept in waiting, made his escape.

The most natural account of this well-known plot against the Protestants, which was now to be put into execution, appears to be this. Admiral Coligny, their head and protector, was to be assassinated: the Protestants, assembled previously in Paris, (being almost all those of rank or consequence in France,) would ascribe

the deed to the Guises, who longed for vengeance for the late duke's death; and a popular tumult, or attack on that family, would give excuse for the massacre, for which preparations had long been made, though with the greatest secrecy. The duke of Anjou records that, when the death of Coligny was proposed, Charles jumped from his seat, shouting aloud, in one of those furious bursts of passion for which he was too celebrated, "swearing horribly, that if the admiral were to be killed, not a single Huguenot should be left alive in France to call him the murderer. He then rushed from that dreadful council, at which his mother presided, and left them," says his brother, "to carry on their consultations for the rest of the evening, and a great part of the night."

The object of this consultation was to decide on the plan of Protestant extermination. As the admiral was not killed by the assassin, the plot changed its character, and the massacre of the Protestants came to be more public, and more directly authorized by the court than it was probably intended to be at first.

It was afterwards recollected, that one of the curious spectacles exhibited for the amusement of the court, on occasion of the royal marriage, might be considered typical of the fate preparing for Protestantism in France. After the fashion of the mysteries, or strange religious representations of an ignorant age, one side of a large hall was made to represent heaven, the entrance to which was guarded by the king of



France and his brothers. On the other was hell, hideously depicted with all sorts of absurd accompaniments. The king of Navarre, with some of his Protestant friends, appeared as armed knights in the scene, and attacked the guards of heaven, seeking to force an entrance, but were repulsed. driven, by the king of France and his brothers, into hell, and shut up there. Navarre—for the prince de Bearn, by the death of his mother, became king—had, probably, never thought of the application of the piece, but it gave great displeasure to many of the Protestants.

The intelligence of Coligny's being wounded enraged king Charles. Both the king of Navarre and prince de Condé came to him, with tears in their eyes, to demand justice on the duke of Guise, as the reputed author of the crime; but, seeing his grief and rage, they went away, satisfied that Charles was innocent of all knowledge of the deed, and would bring its authors to punishment.

The admiral's right arm was amputated. The Protestants viewed, in despair, the loss of that arm which had so long and bravely contended for them: but Catharine and her council were plunged into greater consternation by finding that he still lived. His chamber was soon crowded by ministers of his religion, and nobles, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant, who felt indignation at so base an act. The son of constable Montmorency said, that he suspected whence the blow had come. "I

suspect no one," said Coligny, whose confidence in the king was unshaken, "except Guise, and I am not certain there. But, by the grace of God, I have learned not to fear my enemies; the worst they can do is to bring me to my heavenly rest. . . . One thing afflicts me, that I cannot show the king how greatly I desire to serve him."

In consequence of the wish expressed to speak to him, Charles, without guards, but with his court, visited the suffering admiral. He said to him, "My father, you are wounded, but it is I who suffer." Throughout the rest of that day the king is described as being in a dreadful state of rage, excitement, and indecision. Catharine had gone too far to recede, and it was necessary to force her wretched son to be her accomplice. This she did by fully convincing him of the dangers that would result from the just indignation of the Protestants. Whatever dislike Charles might feel for the murder of Coligny, he afterwards not only consented to, but entirely co-operated in the murder of his Protestant subjects.

It had been predicted that the wedding favours of Navarre would be crimson; so uneasy was the feeling of some who were not so entirely deceived as the old admiral. The unhappy bride describes the state of the palace on the following night, in terms which recall the memory of this saying:—"I saw," says Margaret, "every one in commotion. . . . I knew nothing of what was going on; I was not trusted

by the Huguenots, because I was a Catholic, nor by the Catholics, because the king of Navarre, my husband, was a Protestant. I was in the bed-room of the queen, my mother; my sister saw that I was sad. My mother told me to go to bed; but as I made my curtesy to retire, my sister burst into tears, and caught my arm, saying, 'Don't go, sister.' This terrified me. But my mother called to her not to tell me anything. She replied, that it was dreadful to send me away to be sacrificed. . . My mother observed, that, unless it were the will of God, no harm would happen to me; but, at all events, I must go, or something would be suspected." This was the night of the ever-memorable massacre of St. Bartholomew's day—the night which ushered in that day of blood.

The king made the same attempt as Margaret's sister had done, to retain with him a favourite Protestant companion, whose pleasant society had tended to amuse that dreadful evening. He asked the count de la Rochefoucault to stay and sleep with his attendants; but the unsuspecting nobleman refused, and left the royal murderer, saying gaily, "Good night, my little master!" using the term "little" as the French sometimes do, as expressive of one of familiar endearment. On receiving this parting salutation, the young monarch remarked, "I see clearly that God wills he should perish!" Charles, however, kept his surgeon, a Huguenot, but one, he said, he could not do without, in his own chamber,

Before the dawn of day, queen Catharine and her two sons opened a window in the Louvre, and looked out. A pistol-shot was heard; it was a fatal signal. "The report," said the duke of Anjou, "filled us with such sudden horror, that we lost all sense and judgment. Seized with terror at thoughts of the great evils about to be committed, we sent a gentleman to desire the duke of Guise to proceed no further against admiral Coligny." The weakly-guilty monarch would, at the last moment, have arrested the crime for which he had already issued both arms and orders. But it was then commenced; and, when once begun, his horror and hesitation passed away.

The tolling of the cathedral bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, close to the palace of the Louvre, was the signal for Protestant slaughter. The duke of Guise was to begin it by the murder of Coligny. Companies of citizens had been formed to continue it, and the guards of the duke of Anjou, professedly stationed for the safety of the Protestant dwellings, after the attack on the admiral, were ready to despatch the people they pretended to guard from danger. A white band on the left arm and a white cross in the hat, distinguished the citizen troops. The streets were suddenly illuminated by flambeaux, and lights blazed in the windows of the Louvre.

The wounded Coligny, reposing on the faith of a king, was sleeping, as a Christian at peace with God may sleep. The doors of his house

were burst open ; a horrified attendant appeared in his room. The admiral asked what was the matter. " My lord, God calls us to himself ! " was the answer : a beautiful one, and worthy of a follower of Coligny.

" Save yourselves, my friends," replied the admiral. " All is over with me ; I have long been ready to die." The murderer appeared. " Art thou Coligny ? " he demanded. " Truly I am he," was the martyr's reply. " Young man, you ought to respect my grey hairs." He was instantly killed.

Guise with his comrades were under the window, and to satisfy the former that the opponent of his father was really dead, the body of the murdered old man was thrown out of it to them. That window is still to be seen in Paris. Guise wiped the blood from the venerable face, to see if it were the very same, and then said, " Venomous beast ! thou canst no more infuse thy poison." Ah ! how little did he then foresee that his own dead body would be thus spurned by a royal foot, and these very words repeated over it ! The martyr of Protestantism was gone to be with that all over-ruling God who maketh even the wrath of man to praise him. And what mattered it to him that his lifeless clay was dragged in wild triumph through the streets, mutilated and gibbeted ?

The general massacre commenced, Guise leading it on, and crying to the soldiers and citizens that it was by the king's order ; ex-

horting them to kill every Huguenot. They did not need exhortation.

"The streets," says a French writer, "were covered with mangled bodies. The door-ways, both of palaces and private dwellings, were deep in blood. Yells and murderous cries filled the air, mingled with reports of pistols and muskets: the shrieks of the slaughtered, and the sound of the dead falling from windows, or from the tops of the houses, or dragged along the ground with hideous howlings. . . . Houses were sacked and robbed. Carts passed, sometimes filled with spoil, sometimes loaded with dead to be cast into the Seine." That river was red with the blood that ran through the streets, and more especially through the court of the Louvre, the king's own palace, in the neighbourhood of which nearly all the Protestants had been brought to reside. The massacre was carried on with equal diligence within the very walls of that palace.

Margaret, the new-made queen of Navarre, continues her relation of the events of that horrible night in a strain which appears too light, in some of its details, for such a subject. She had fallen asleep in the uneasy state of mind before mentioned, when a loud cry of "Navarre, Navarre!" with a violent knocking at her chamber door, make her nurse, who was watching with her, run to open it. A Protestant gentleman, covered with blood, and closely pursued by four archers of

the royal guard, rushed in, and, as the terrified queen sprang from her bed, he caught her, to protect himself, in his arms, interposing her person between him and the murderers. Their united screams brought the captain of the guard, who, she says, could not forbear laughing, but reprimanded the soldiers; and Margaret hid the poor wounded Protestant in her closet, and, when he was cured, obtained his pardon. "While I was changing my night-dress," says the young queen, "the captain told me what was going on, but assured me the king, my husband, was safe, and in the royal apartments with the king, my brother: and, throwing a cloak over me, led me to my sister Lorraine, more dead than alive with fright. As I entered the ante-chamber, a gentleman, who was flying from the archers, received a stroke from a halberd, and fell dead at my feet. I fainted, and the captain thought the same stroke had killed us both. Soon after, two gentlemen of the court came to implore me to save them; I went and threw myself at the feet of the king and queen, and at last obtained my request." Such is the light, yet fearful description of the scenes that passed in the royal palace of her brother and mother, given by the newly-married queen of Navarre—whose wedding favours indeed were crimson.

The unfortunate count de la Rochefoucault, who would not remain with Charles, having spent some of the intervening time in a continuance of those idle pleasures, which formed

no preparation for such a sequel to the evening, had gone late to his house, and, when awakened by the uproar, he imagined that the young king was coming in a frolic to attack him, as was not a very unlikely circumstance. He rose to give admittance to what he believed to be a band of court rioters, and was killed as he opened the door. For the space of three days the fury of slaughter raged unabated, and continued in a less degree for a whole week. Of all the Protestants of the royal palace, the three Margaret saved, and the old Huguenot nurse of the king, together with his pet physician, were the only survivors. Sully, afterwards the celebrated minister of Navarre, when Henry iv. of France, escaped in the robe of a scholar, by carrying a large prayer-book under his arm; and the Calvinist minister, who was attending on Coligny at his death, was one of the friends that brave old man urged to save themselves, and was providentially enabled to do so. He got over the roof of the houses into a hay-loft, where he lay hid for the entire week, while his life was preserved by a hen, who came daily to deposit her egg in a nest close to him. Some Protestants who lived at the other side of the Seine escaped also. It is said that Charles, seeing the probable escape of a party of these, fired on them himself from a window of the palace. Such an act was not wanted to cover his memory with the infamy, which belongs even to the weak who voluntarily yield to wickedness. High and low, the noble and the



servant, were torn from their beds, murdered, and flung out of their windows. The little prince de Conti was carried by his old governor into the streets, who thought some one would protect them. The little child tried to cover the old man with his arms, but such defence was vain. Thus was the long-continued conflict against Protestantism in France brought to its consummation ; but still, still to be renewed.

A royal messenger was despatched to Rome with tidings of this triumph. The cardinal of Lorraine was there, and questioned the man as if he already knew what was to have taken place. The pope exulted in the victory of the church, and went with the bishops and cardinals, in public procession, to give thanks for it in public. A medal was struck to commemorate the downfall of Protestantism in the kingdom of France : and it has even been asserted, that the head of the old defender of that faith, admiral Coligny, was sent as a present to the pope.

The intelligence was differently received in England. Elizabeth testified her horror of this dreadful act. The French ambassador, on going to her court, found herself and all her ladies attired in deep mourning ; the rooms were hung in black, and he was received in a mournful and reproachful silence.

Spain rejoiced with Rome ; but the court of France itself was as miserable as guilty consciences could render it. We could almost hope that the wretched king was the victim of

insanity. On the second day of the massacre, he described his feelings to his physician, and said his soul and body burned in constant fever. He saw bloody faces around him, and thought the air was full of hideous sounds. In consequence of the advice he received, a trumpeter was sent to proclaim a cessation of the massacre: but the licence of a furious mob, once permitted, is not easily checked. Charles found not only his Protestant, but many of his Roman Catholic subjects were murdered. Robbery raged everywhere, and private revenge took occasion of the tumult, so that many who were not Huguenots suffered death with them. One of the leaders who acted under the orders of the king and his mother, said, "Paris has the air of a city taken by storm; to the regret of those who thus ordered it, who meant only to cause the death of the chiefs, and of the factious; . . but all the Huguenots were killed by the people, indifferently, the king not being able to control the arms he had once let loose. . . . When rage began to cool, the act looked more formidable to the mind: the blood that was shed wounded the conscience." Conscience indeed, however hardened, will awake, but the influence of such a sinful and dissipated court as that of Catharine de' Medici, can be guessed at from the fact, that the fine ladies of that court went to amuse themselves in looking at the dead bodies of their Protestant acquaintances, whom they had but a day before joined with in gay society,

Yet, while many a dying bed can witness to the power of an awakening conscience, religious prejudice and bigoted feeling have also been known to retain their sway to the end. The French author above quoted gives an account of the death-bed of his father, one of the foremost of the assassins at this massacre, who shouted in the streets of Paris, "Bleed ! bleed !—bleeding is as useful in the month of August as in May !" But when this man lay dying, and had made a general confession of the sins of his life, his son records, in his memoirs, that the confessor, surprised at his passing over the events of St. Bartholomew, asked him, had he nothing to say on that subject. "I regard it," said the dying marshal, "as a meritorious action which ought to efface all my sins."

The king of Navarre, and the prince de Condé, says Sully, in his *Memoirs*, were summoned to attend the king: "they were forbid to take their swords, and as they went out, they saw several of their gentlemen disrespectfully massacred before their eyes. Charles received them with a visage and eyes in which fury was painted, and ordered them, with the oaths and blasphemies which were familiar to him, to quit a religion which they had taken up as a pretext for rebellion. . . . He told them he would be no longer contradicted in his sentiments by his subjects, and that they should teach others, by their example, to revere him as the image of God, and to cease to be enemies to the images of his mother.

He ended, by declaring, that if they did not go to mass, he would forthwith treat them as criminals, guilty of treason against Divine and human majesty. The manner in which these words were pronounced not permitting them to doubt but that they were sincere, they bended under violence, and did what was exacted. Though this submission saved Navarre's life, in other respects he fared but little the better for it. He was subject to the caprices and insults of the court; at times free, oftener closely confined, and treated as a criminal."\*

Navarre, whom Voltaire calls "the firmest and most intrepid of men," and who, indeed, was so in general, did not, in the cause of religion, show the firmness of a little girl of thirteen years old, the daughter of a Protestant minister, who suffered herself to be tortured with hot irons without making the concession which the firm-hearted king almost immediately made.

Both Navarre and Condé consented to go to mass, though they did not formally abjure, and both were obliged to remain in a state of miserable slavery at the court of France. The name of religion is thus seen to be different from the power of religion. The king of Navarre, fretful and impatient, either passed his time in revolving plans for his escape from the court, or plunged into a wild excess of riot with the still more unhappy Charles. He, together with the old nurse and physician, are said to have been the only persons whom that remorseful king either

\* Sully's Memoirs, Vol. I.

loved or trusted. He was jealous of his brother Anjou, and feared his cruel mother. From the time of the Huguenot massacre he plunged into the wildest dissipation, and seemed to seek a refuge from thought in constant and violent exercise, delighting chiefly in hunting and blowing the horn.

The duke of Anjou was elected king of Poland, but his reluctance to leave the gay court of Paris displeased his brother. Catharine interposed, and prevailed on her favourite son to depart, using the afterwards remembered words, "Go, my son; you will not stay long away." Charles accompanied his brother, intending to see him as far on his road as the frontier of the kingdom; but he was taken ill and obliged to return. From that time, it is conjectured, a slow, but fatal, poison worked on his frame; and suspicion attaches to his brother, or mother, or both. Such a crime might easily be imputed to Catharine de' Medici.

In the course of his illness a plot was discovered, the object of which was to release Navarre and Condé from thralldom. In the room of one of the conspirators was found a waxen image, which it was believed a magician had made, in order to destroy the king's life by sympathy. His physician imputed his illness to his having blown too hard upon the horn when hunting. That illness was of a singular nature. Blood issued from his ears, eyes, nose, and even from the pores of his body. He was indifferent to all things, and was watched only

by the old Huguenot woman and the Huguenot doctor. He would cry to his Protestant nurse, when assailed by remorse, "Ah! my friend, I have followed wrong advice; God forgive me! What will be the consequence of all this? What shall I do? I feel I am lost!"

The dislike which the wretched king had latterly felt for his mother increased as he drew near his end. Sully says: "The condition to which Charles saw himself reduced created suspicion in his mind against his mother; so that, uniting his interest with the reformed, he began to show them a great deal of good-will." "It principally appeared in his permitting them, notwithstanding the opposition of the queen mother, to send deputies to state their grievances and demands at court. The petition, indeed, was signed only by four or five gentlemen, but it showed unshaken firmness in a party that seemed to derive strength from its losses. The queen conceived a violent spite. The king now refused her his authority, and all she could do was to use delays, till the death of this prince, which she well foresaw was not far distant. The reformed penetrated her intention; and that they might not be surprised, appeared suddenly in arms."\* The dying king had no longer any taste for cruelty and blood. When his mother came exultingly to tell him that the Huguenot count Montgomery had at last been taken, and would be executed, Charles turned

• Sully's Memoirs.

away his head in silence. When death was drawing on he asked for his brother; Catharine brought his youngest; he said, "Not this; my brother Navarre." Navarre was then in confinement, owing to the late conspiracy. He expected to receive a sentence of death; but when Charles saw him he stretched out his arms to him. Navarre threw himself on his knees beside him, weeping to see his state. He did not leave him again till death came on.

Thus, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, died Charles ix., after filling the throne of France for fourteen years. Truly "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!" We feel their blessedness, when we stand by the bed of the dying saint; we feel it also when we stand by the bed of the dying sinner. Charles ix. survived the massacre of his Protestant subjects about a year and nine months, dying on the 30th of May, 1574. "It could not," says Brantome, "be driven out of some persons' minds that he was poisoned when his brother went to Poland, by some powder, which makes a person languish a long time, dwindle away, and go out like the wick of a candle."

We wished to finish his sad history before glancing briefly over the events of that of Protestantism, which intervened between the date of his death and that of the too memorable massacre which is named from St. Bartholomew's day.

An abbé of the Roman church has said, "The court thought to drown Calvinism in the

blood of its principal defenders, but the hydra resumed fresh vigour." To judge of the violent effort made to extinguish, by a general massacre, what neither ceaseless persecution nor arms could put down, we must not stop with the cruel massacre at Paris. Massacre became general through France; wherever there were Protestants, there there were murders. Orders were issued from the court to the governors of towns or provinces for that purpose. It is related of one governor, that he replied to Charles, saying, his majesty had many faithful subjects in that town, but not one executioner. The speech, though a noble one, is said, by some authors, to be fabulous.

We do not intend to dwell on the frightful scenes that speedily ensued. They commenced in the city of Meaux, where the gospel, aided by the good, but unstedfast bishop, the pious Lefèvre, and the resolute Farel, had once so brightly flourished. At Lyons, always eminent in the history of Christianity, of Protestantism, and of martyrdom, the massacres were so great, that the waters of the Rhone ran red with blood; and at Arles, where the first Christian council of ancient Gaul was held, the inhabitants could not use these blood-stained waters. Yet Protestantism was not extinct. A large number of Protestants, with many of their Calvinist ministers, shut themselves up in Rochelle, and there endured the long and well-known siege of five months' duration, suffering famine and pestilence, and



resisting their enemies with a fury which even women and children shared.

A peace was at last obtained on more favourable terms than might have been expected. Its chief particulars were liberty of conscience, accorded to the Protestants in three of the provincial towns, Nismes, Montauban, and la Rochelle. The higher orders were allowed to have the rites of baptism and marriage performed, according to the reformed mode, in their houses, or castles, on condition of not more than ten persons being present.

The prince de Condé escaped into Germany at the time of the conspiracy before alluded to. On arriving at the first German town, Strassburgh, he renewed his profession of Protestantism.

Montgomery, who had proved one of the most formidable of the Huguenot commanders, was taken and executed, after being barbarously tortured, to induce him to criminate admiral Coligny. This he refused to do, and was afterwards executed, as Catharine, whether she believed him to be guilty or not, charged him with wilfully killing her husband, Henry II. As he was going to execution, he refused to attend to the priest who had been placed by his side. A monk, pitying his apparently hardened state, addressed him also, and told him he had been grossly deceived. "If I have," replied Montgomery, with firmness, "it was one of your own order who first deceived me; for the first person who gave me a Bible, and made

me read it, was a monk like you. From that Bible I learned the religion I now possess. The religion of the Bible is the only true one; I have lived in it ever since, and desire now, by the grace of God, to die in it."

With the close of the reign of Charles ix. we end this volume of the history of Protestantism in France. Can we conclude this painfully-interesting narrative better than with a prayer for the whole estate of Christ's church militant here on earth, that it may be so guided and governed by God's good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves CHRISTIANS may be led into the way of truth; and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life?

THE HISTORY

OF

PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

PART II.

FROM THE END OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES IX. TO THE  
REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.



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THE HISTORY  
OF  
PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE.

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CHAPTER I.

HENRY III. 1574—1589.

PART I.

ON the death of Charles IX.,\* his next brother, Henry, the former duke of Anjou, who had recently accepted the crown of Poland, succeeded to the throne of France. His departure to that distant kingdom had been a relief to the fears and jealousy of his miserable brother king Charles, who, aware of his mother's partiality for her more brilliant and handsome son, dreaded the ambitious designs of both. The ominous words of Catharine de' Medici, when

\* The History of Protestantism in France, from the earliest ages to the end of the reign of Charles IX., has been traced in a former volume of the Monthly Series.

at last dismissing her reluctant son from the dissipated court of Paris, "Go, my son, thou wilt not be long away," were soon fulfilled. King Charles attended his brother on his way to the frontier, and returned sooner than he had intended, being attacked by that mysterious malady—generally attributed to the effect of subtle poison—which, in a manner so deplorable, terminated an existence rendered miserable by remorse. On receiving hasty intelligence of his death, Henry, fearing to be forcibly detained by the Polish nobles, took flight secretly from his new kingdom: he was pursued by a body of horsemen, and would have been seized before he had got out of Poland if the French ambassador had not preceded him, and ordered fresh horses along the road—a rather singular instance of a sovereign flying like a criminal from subjects who wished him to reign over them.

On his journey to Poland, Henry had visited some of the courts of the German Protestant princes, who had provided for him no agreeable remembrancers. At Heidelberg—a place interesting to English feelings or Protestant sympathies as the later residence of the heroic and fascinating Protestant queen of Bohemia, the daughter of our James I.—the young king of Poland had been received by the elector Palatine, in the midst of a group of Protestant refugees from France—the escaped of St. Bartholomew—whose looks of solemn sadness showed no loyal recognition of their prince,



and, in the chamber prepared for him, the elector pointed out a large picture of that dreadful massacre, with full-length portraits of Coligny and the other most celebrated victims. "You know that man," he said; "you have killed the greatest general in Christendom; and you ought not to have done so, for he did the king and yourself great services." And with that stern reproof he turned and left him. Henry, therefore, avoided returning by the same route. In consequence of a conspiracy which was discovered during the illness of king Charles, his brother, the duke of Alençon and the king of Navarre were kept close prisoners. Catharine went to Lyons to meet her favourite son on his return to his kingdom; she took these royal prisoners with her; "but," says the lively historian, Sully, "she did it with so much cleverness, that one would have thought she did them honour who saw them riding in the carriage with her." On the arrival of Henry III., he pardoned both, and set them nominally free, but they could not leave the court, and remained under strict surveillance. The Protestants of France, and of Europe generally, waited with anxiety the determination of the new king with respect to that part of his subjects.

During the two years that had elapsed since their final destruction, in the massacre of Paris, had been attempted, the Protestants of France had again become a formidable power in the state which still refused them toleration. The

words of the abbé Crillon were verified—"The court thought to drown Calvinism in the blood of its defenders; but that hydra resumed new vigour." Unhappily, we must pursue the history of Protestantism in France in connexion with that of court cabals and political discontents; and we cannot wonder if, when ambition, worldliness, and sin, characterized in general the conduct of the leaders, the cause of the Protestants became liable to the charge of turbulence and sedition. Injustice, oppression, and violence, obliged them to look for support to these factious or discontented nobles, who used them as instruments to the attainment of their own views.

Henry III. appeared for some time undecided as to the policy he should adopt towards them; but, as duke of Anjou, he had commanded the army against them, and formed one of the cruel council of the Louvre when the plan of their slaughter was arranged. Persons generally hate those whom they have wronged, and, instead of conciliating, Henry III., unhappily for himself, finally resolved on exterminating the Protestants. This resolution was delayed by sinful occupations. The court, then held at Lyons, was unsurpassed in brilliancy and licentiousness. The young monarch indemnified himself in its luxurious enjoyments for his temporary banishment in comparatively uncivilized Poland.

A criminal design, though of a different nature, tended to prolong the respite thus given

to the Protestants. He had long entertained a guilty passion for the wife of the Protestant chief, the prince de Condé; he now proposed to obtain her divorce from the prince, and to marry her himself. His ever-vigilant mother intercepted the letter which declared this intention; she saw that such a marriage, by giving her son an influential and Protestant wife, would annihilate her power over him; she wrote to the husband of the princess, warning him of the threatened danger, and urging him to remove his wife from the court; the prince, not believing his marriage could be dissolved, left her there to forward his interests. But the hopes of the king were fatally crossed by the sudden death of the too charming princess—a death attributed to the fears, jealousy, and poisoning arts of Catharine de' Medici. The grief of the young monarch was poignant, and even violent; but, brought up in habits of awe, he dared not charge his mother with the crime of which he did not doubt she was guilty!

At length, Henry set off to assist in the reduction of the town of Livron, where his enemy besieged a scanty, yet determined, Protestant garrison; he did not go, however, unattended by his brilliant court and his dominating mother. Never, perhaps, had he heard the voice of truth so plainly as from the walls of Livron: men, women, and even children, upbraided him and his followers, calling them assassins and cowards, and asking if they had come to mur-

der them in their beds, as they had murdered admiral Coligny and others.

Henry retired from the town, raised the siege, and withdrew his army. "From this time," says Sully, "he began to show himself so unlike what he had been when duke of Anjou, that it may be said this shameful flight to Avignon was the epoch of his ignominy, and of the misfortunes that ensued to himself and his kingdom." Henry III., indeed, soon disappointed the early hopes with which his brilliant youth might have inspired his fond mother or admiring friends. The corruptions of the most dissolute court in Europe, the blandishments which were spread around him, the enervating course of life to which his power-loving mother wished to confine him, soon caused the destruction of any good or kingly quality which might have lingered in his breast, and the young king of France became, in a short time, as notorious for weakness as for wickedness.

The famous cardinal Lorraine, so long the most prominent persecutor of the French Protestants, died about this time, of a cold caught by walking barefoot in a religious procession; his princely revenues had been largely devoted to political purposes.

And now, with the exception of the queen-mother, the scenes of our history will be filled with new characters, among which "the three Henriess"—Henry III., Henry of Navarre, and Henry of Guise, are the principal. The latter, the duke of Guise, was the son of the cele-

brated opponent of Coligny and Condé, and though not considered, in the usual acceptation of the word, so great a man as his father, was yet the most brilliant and popular of his time: we have already seen the odious celebrity he acquired by his conduct at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and by the murder of the old admiral—an act which, though instigated by private vengeance for the supposed assassination of his father, has left a stigma on his character which the glare of popular qualities cannot remove.

The ambition which had long distinguished the house of Guise rose to its height in the character and conduct of this young duke, and directed him to that career which, to the eye of the undiscerning multitude, was shrouded by the desecrated name of religion, and ascribed to a devout and chivalrous zeal for the Catholic faith. Henry of Navarre was the only person in whom king Henry III. really confided: he lived in constant apprehension of being poisoned by his only surviving brother, the duke of Alençon, and employed the king of Navarre, himself a prisoner at large in his court, as his body-guard.

Alençon was of a turbulent, dissatisfied temper, and increased the miseries of his distracted country. Catharine, with a view to remove him from it, made overtures for his marriage with our queen Elizabeth; but the maiden monarch, while she amused all her suitors with hopes, had, probably, still less idea of accepting

Alençon than she had of accepting his handsome and admired brother when duke of Anjou, whom she had kept some time in suspense on the same subject. That most singular woman, Catharine de' Medici, had been told by an astrologer that her four sons should be kings : to fulfil this prophecy, or obtain this object of her ambition, it has been hinted that she would not have scrupled to remove one in order to enthrone another.

But all these jealousies, fears, dissatisfactions, and personal ambition, of the great, were injurious to the Protestant church in France. It became as the cave of Adullam, unto which all the discontented repaired, not altogether instigated by a zeal for David, but actuated by a desire of redressing their own wrongs, or escaping from their own troubles. Protestantism and politics had long been more or less identified ; but Protestantism became latterly combined also with conspiracy and faction, and writers who, in mistaken zeal for a cause righteous and just in itself, do not use discrimination on this point, only present a one-sided view of their subject, which is contradicted by true history.

The Huguenot wars, previous to the massacre of St. Bartholomew, were religious wars ; but, just before the death of Charles ix., there appeared the conspiracy of the *politiques*, or malcontents, who, making use of the Protestants as an instrument for gaining their own political ends, were also the means of forming, as it were, a party within a party, one entirely political,

opposed to the government, and contending for merely secular advantages, within a religious one, to whom the government was opposed, and whose object was religious freedom. The duke of Alençon, the king's brother, placed himself at the head of these malcontents, and the apparent junction with their oppressed band of the next heir to the throne, flattered and deluded the Protestants. Alençon, by the aid of his sister, the beautiful queen of Navarre, escaped from his brother's court, and joined them in arms against the king.

The prince de Condé had previously escaped to Germany, from whence he brought a large body of troops, and then resigned to the heir-apparent of the crown of France the command of the Protestant forces. The duke of Guise, and the duke of Mayenne, his brother, commanded those of the king. In a battle which took place when the former were unprepared, Guise was completely victorious, and received a conspicuous wound on the cheek, which obtained him no little credit from the Catholic party, and, in honour of which, he was ever afterwards styled *Le Balafré*. "Catharine," says Sully, "had recourse to another game: she tried to win back Alençon by promises; she pursued him from city to city, always attended by a retinue of fine ladies. In a word, she managed so well that, at last, he fell into the snare."

The king of Navarre, meantime, was still a well-watched prisoner at the court of France;

deprived of almost all his Protestant friends, even the external profession of religion given up, his time was spent in wearisome idleness, noisy revelry, or degrading dissipation. A few faithful Protestants were, however, still near him, one of whom was the celebrated D'Aubigné, the historian of his times; he beheld with grief the apparently reckless career of his young royal master, whose talents lay dormant, whose energies were unemployed, whose time was wasted in heartless amusements or sinful pursuits, who appeared lost to the hopes of this world and to those of the world to come.

But a mind like that which Henry of Navarre possessed could not rest satisfied in such a state of existence; he wished the court to believe that he was wholly engrossed by frivolous pursuits or sinful pleasures, and while unable to escape from a mode of life he disliked and despised, he plunged into wilder dissipation as a resource from that restless vacuity which is intolerable to a vigorous mind and ambitious spirit; he did not know the peace of God which is able to keep the soul in calmness, and save it from being made the sport of human circumstances. But as the secret thought of every man is deep, we should be careful not to say that any are reprobate, for the heart may groan in secret that appears most callous in public. At the very time when the young king's friends were ready to give him up as lost to their religion and themselves, D'Aubigné says that he one night



heard him lamenting to himself the want of a faithful friend, mournfully repeating a passage of the Psalms. D'Aubigné then ventured to approach him, and say, "You sigh, sire, for absent friends, but they are lamenting your loss. You have tears in your eyes for them, but they have arms in their hands for you; they fight against the enemies you are serving."\*

From that time, the escape of the king of Navarre from the French court was secretly planned, and, though with much risk, it was accomplished by a stratagem when out hunting. He was followed by many Catholics of distinction, whose friendship he had gained, or who shared the discontent so general at court, and, having joined the duke of Alençon and the prince de Condé, he went to Tours, where he immediately renounced the compulsory observance of the Roman Catholic religion. "I was one of those," says his biographer, Sully, "who accompanied the king in his flight. He sent me back to demand his sister Catharine from the court; she was delivered to us, and the second day after, this princess also returning to her religion, heard a sermon at Chateaudun, and joined the king, her brother, who waited for her."

The three princes, on the junction of their forces, found themselves at the head of fifty thousand men, and made the queen-mother, the

\* This D'Aubigné was the grandfather of the celebrated Madame de Maintenon, whose life will hereafter be noticed.

acting head of the court, now tremble in her turn. A cruel war again appeared to draw on. Powerful, indeed, is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience — deeds of crime mark its way! The first sparks of the bloody civil war, which had for so many years already devastated the fine provinces of France, were kindled by intolerance, by the narrow, dark, unholy spirit of bigotry. Alas! the very name of religion becomes more and more desecrated as we advance in this history! The Christian heart can only cry—"Prince of peace, when shall thy blessed title be recognised? when shall thy kingdom come, and thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven?"

The alliance of the king's brother with the Protestants gave a high-sounding name, but little more, to their cause; the presence of the king of Navarre was, in itself, an additional strength. But, though a king was on the throne of France, Catharine was still the ruler, and her practice was to employ arts rather than arms. "She talked of peace; she promised more than we asked: promises cost that artful princess nothing. She had the address to make the princes lay down their arms. Peace was concluded; it must be confessed it was one most advantageous to us, yet the princes never committed a greater fault than when they signed it. Monsieur" (that is, the duke of Alençon,) "afterwards committed another, when, contrary to his best interests, he separated from the reformers."

Alençon, however, consulted only what he thought his own interest in withdrawing from the reformed party, as he had consulted only his own designs in joining it. He fought against the Protestants as willingly as for them. The articles of this peace were favourable to the Protestants; a remarkable one was, that the memory of admiral Coligny and other Huguenot chiefs was pronounced clear of all the charges brought against them. The principal political concession, and one never before granted, was, that in some of the parliaments held in the chief towns of France, chambers of justice were to be appointed, composed equally of Protestants and Catholics. This right of representation the Protestants had often sought; but, after all, it added nothing to their spiritual good, and only tended to disturb still more their temporal peace. They had demanded that a portion of the church tithes should be appropriated to the payment of their own ministers, but this demand was refused. The situation of these poor ministers was often very deplorable. The people, impoverished by war, were ill able to make a voluntary payment; the supply of ministers was naturally becoming more and more scanty, and sometimes in the assemblies severe condemnation fell on some of the churches for the "ingratitude" manifested in neglecting that very poor subsidy on which their ministers were dependent.

The free exercise of their religion, for which they had so long struggled, was now guaranteed

to the reformed, and a Coligny would have repeated, "If we have our religion, let us be content." But the hope that rested in the faith of Catharine de' Medici was almost a forlorn one. It has been truly said of her, that in all her negotiations she reserved to herself the pleasure of breaking her word!

"The king of Navarre," continues Sully, "seeing the peace made, retired to Rochelle, but scarcely had he opened his mouth to demand the fulfilment of the treaty, than he was made sensible of his error. Catharine declared she had never promised anything to the Protestants, who had recourse to arms again before the expiration of the year." In fact, the whole object of this pretended treaty was to detach the royal duke from the Protestant party; her son once regained, the levity of Catharine de' Medici allowed her to laugh at the means she had employed; while king Henry III. attempted to silence the murmurs of the Catholics by refusing every privilege promised to the Protestants.

The liberty to exercise their worship freely had been eagerly accepted; but their opponents were scandalized at such a toleration of heresy. At Rouen, the councillors of the parliament prevailed on the old cardinal of Bourbon, an easy and not ill-intentioned man, and uncle to the king, to accompany them to the Protestant assembly, in order, authoritatively, to disperse it. The cardinal entered the temple, as Protestant places of worship in France are called,

holding the cross and banner in his hand, and advanced unmolested to the pulpit; the building was instantly evacuated by the worshippers, who had no inclination to hear his address. The king was afterwards told that the cardinal of Bourbon had driven away all the Huguenots of Rouen by his cross and banner.

Henry, at that same time, was trying to deceive, or allure, these people by specious declarations, but, on hearing this, he let his true sentiments towards them appear, by exclaiming, "Would to heaven he could drive them as quickly from all the towns in France, even were it necessary to add the holy water-basin to the cross and banner!"

Notwithstanding the concessions made to the Protestants by the late treaty never were fulfilled, yet the simple fact that they were made, constituted the ostensible ground for the formation of the celebrated Catholic League, the professed object of which was the defence of the church, and the destruction of heretics. The rise of this memorable League opens a new era in the History of Protestantism in France.

## CHAPTER II.

HENRY III.

### PART II.

THE famous Catholic League, which became in time so formidable to the royal power, while directed ostensibly against the Protestant heresy, had been contemplated before the massacre of 1572, and had its origin in the great religious fraternities which, under a semblance of devotional purposes, disguised a combination for hostile proceedings. In almost all the large towns of France, one of these brotherhoods had been formed, which made processions through the streets on certain days, with all the appearance and accompaniments of a purely religious association ; but the members were united by a vow to devote life and property to the defence of the church, and the latitude given to that expression generally comprised within it the abolition of any other church than that of Rome. The highest persons of the realm had joined these brotherhoods, and every brother was

ready to take arms at the command of their directors. The cardinal of Lorraine had proposed to the Council of Trent the formation of a general Catholic association, as a counterpoise to the fast-spreading influence of Protestantism; but it was reserved to the celebrated Henry of Guise to complete the half-formed scheme, and bring it into operation, A.D. 1576.

The first and great object of this memorable League was stated to be, "the restoration of the Catholic religion."

An abstract of its plan was said to have been found among the papers of a crazy lawyer, who died while travelling to Rome with the intention of submitting it to the pope. It is remarkable, that whether this scheme had, or had not, its origin, as a Catholic writer says, "in the weak and troubled brain of this mad lawyer," it is precisely that actually carried into operation by the great Catholic League, under the direction of the duke of Guise; yet the people of France, and perhaps Henry III. himself, suspected the Protestants of forging the paper which was now made public, and of which the following is a brief abstract: it shows that the object of the League was directed against the reigning power, as much as against the prevailing heresy.

The princes of the house of Guise are first proved to be the lineal descendants of Charlemagne, and as such the lawful heirs to the throne. The reigning house of Valois are usurpers, during whose unhappy reigns the

kingdom of France has been a prey to heresy, such as that of the Albigenses, and Poor Men of Lyons, etc. The peace recently concluded tended to establish Calvinism in France ; the Catholics, therefore, who desired to unite for the support of the faith, are required to agree on these points. That in the pulpit and confessional the clergy shall exert themselves to oppose the privileges awarded to sectarians, and excite all faithful people to prevent them from being available. If the king fear the consequences of breaking the peace, he shall be told to cast all the blame on the duke of Guise ; this will only tend to increase the duke's popularity. All the confederates shall acknowledge Guise as their chief. The priests in the country shall keep lists of all men able to bear arms, and instruct them in the confessional what they shall have to do, having themselves received their instructions from their superiors, who will have them from the duke of Guise, by whom also officers will be sent to form the recruits thus raised in the country.

The Protestants having demanded the assembly of the states-general, (or parliament,) they shall meet at Blois, make a general confession of faith, order the publication of the decrees of the council of Trent, place the kingdom under the immediate authority of the pope, confirm the edicts for the destruction of heresy, and revoke all that are contrary thereto, thus freeing the king from all obligation to keep faith with the Calvinists. Some time shall be allowed to these to return to the church, and, during that



time, preparation shall be made for the extermination of all such as are obstinate. The states will prove to the king that one chief only can be appointed to this undertaking, and name the duke of Guise as the only great general who has had no connexion with the heretics.

The last proposition is the only one that need be added: "the duke shall finally, by the pope's advice, shut up the king in a monastery for the rest of his days, as Pepin formerly did Childeric." Whatever credit, as a legitimate composition, this paper may deserve, it is a fact that it contains the plan of action which Guise openly or secretly carried out; it presents no unfair or distorted outline of the nature and objects of the Catholic League, and affords a specimen of the popular sentiments of the times, even with regard to the final proposition of shutting up the king in a monastery.

Such a destiny, it is true, would, only three years previously, have appeared very unsuitable to that gay and brilliant prince; but Henry III. bore no resemblance to what he had been when duke of Anjou; his downward course in vice had been rapid. To luxurious, licentious, and effeminate habits, he had added an absurd excess of superstitious devotion. The following description, translated from the French of Voltaire, gives an idea in few words of that king's present career: "He associated his favourites both in his devotions and his debaucheries. He retired with them for religious seclusion; he went with them on pilgrimages; he made use

of the scourge ; he instituted the Brotherhood of Death—the Capuchin monks were their directors ; the brothers were clothed in a robe of black stuff with a hood. . . . He was persuaded by certain theologians of his time that these mummeries expiated habitual sins. Henry III. also lived in all the luxurious effeminacy of a coquetish woman. He slept in gloves of a particular skin to preserve the beauty of his hands, which (like those of his mother) were in fact more beautiful than the hands of any lady of his court ; he put on his face a peculiar paste, to preserve his complexion, and wore a mask over it.”

Another of this monarch’s singular tastes was for what are commonly called “pets :” monkeys, macaws, puppies, and all sorts of creatures, which, however good in their own spheres of existence, were, in the king’s apartments, a nuisance ; their noise often overpowered persons who were admitted to an audience, and a grave ambassador, in the midst of a profound disquisition, might be startled by a liberated baboon springing on his back. The court of Henry III. had, indeed, become as contemptible as it had long been corrupt. Not only did vice raise there an unblushing head, but crime walked there unpunished. There, a minister stabbed his wife and her waiting-woman while at her toilette, and was never brought to justice. “None but fools, courtesans, and buffoons,” says Sully, bitterly, “could find any favour from the king.” In his court at Blois, Henry would

appear in a woman's dress, his neck encircled with pearls, while the ladies sometimes adopted the contrary garb.

Such was now the sovereign of the land in which Protestantism had so long striven for toleration, and such was the prince who had to contend against two powerful parties in his kingdom—the League, headed by the popular duke of Guise, and the Protestants, led by the brave, laborious, and generous king of Navarre. The fertile brain and untiring energy of Catharine de' Medici was her son's resource, and, if we may rely on the authority of a historian who knew her intimately, "she had more wisdom than all the council of Charles ix. put together." But it was the wisdom of this world, which we see so often comes to nought—"the wise are taken in their own craftiness."

The states-general were assembled at Blois, at that fine old castle which still frowns over the smiling Loire; Henry III. appeared before the parliamentary assembly, and resumed on that occasion, as he could do when an urgent or stimulating cause required, the air of grace and majesty, the look of conscious power, which formerly had charmed all beholders, and won the partiality of his fond, yet cruel, mother. His speech, too, at a period when speeches were not made for royalty to utter, would prevent even charity from ascribing to mental derangement the conduct that was hurrying himself and his kingdom to ruin.

From this assembly, the Protestants hoped to

obtain the ratification of the late edict in their favour; but the Catholics, reckoning on the power of the newly-formed League, were as sanguine of its revocation. As for the king, he desired to practise the temporizing policy of his mother; to hold the scales between the parties with an even hand, and leave them, in their efforts to weigh each other down, to promote his power. But this neutral policy could not be maintained. The power of the League swayed the assembly. The resolutions passed by the states of Blois, A.D. 1576, were to the intent, that there should be but one religion in France—that the king should be urged to make all his subjects unite themselves to the church—that the exercise of the religion which pretended to call itself *reformed* should be prohibited, both in public and private—and that all Protestant ministers should be banished from the kingdom. There was some division in the house; the commons, while agreeing on the question of conformity, argued the necessity of employing gentle means of effecting it; the nobles and the higher orders of the clergy contended for absolute uniformity, without any clause as to the means by which it might be obtained.

Henry found himself reduced to the alternative of joining either the League or the Protestants; the quiet neutrality he had proposed to himself was untenable. Both pride and prejudice would have prevented his joining the latter: he chose the former to his own ruin,

and undoubtedly to his country's loss. He gave to the League the title of the Holy Union, and, with the design of contravening the ambition of Guise, declared himself its chief.

Baffled for the moment, the aspiring duke was not diverted from his purpose: he knew Henry's sloth and apathy would render his new position as chief of the League intolerable to him, if called on to exercise its functions; he summoned him, therefore, to take arms for the prompt extermination of the heretics. The king, obliged to prepare for action, ordered an army against the Protestants; it was preceded by an embassy, headed by the archbishop of Vienna, to invite the return and submission of their leaders to the church. "They were commissioned," says Sully, "to invite the king of Navarre to embrace the Catholic religion, which the states had declared should alone be maintained in the kingdom."

The archbishop made so moving an appeal to Navarre on the miseries of civil and religious warfare, that it drew tears from his eyes; but Henry of Navarre had already marked out his course, and we shall see him steadily pursuing it. He replied, that he was not bigoted in religion, of which assertion, indeed, his life only gave too sufficient proof, but that he believed in his conscience the Protestant was the best; that he could not purchase peace for himself at the risk of sacrificing others; that to threaten him with an exterminating war if he did not recant, was not

the way to convince him of religious error ; and that he could not with safety to himself quit the party he had joined, when all the promises so recently made by the court had been so easily revoked. "But"—he always reserved that saving clause to himself—"if it should please God to open his eyes to see his error, he would instantly abjure Protestantism, and do his utmost to abolish it."

If the king of Navarre did use the last words attributed to him, he must have forgotten that he was promising to be guilty of the same religious intolerance with which he charged his adversaries. But whether he said so or not, it is certain he did not act in accordance with these words when he professed to have had his understanding opened to see his error ; he did not then do his utmost to abolish the so-called heresy he had left ; he, on the contrary, protected it. But, in all respects, the king of Navarre's conduct must be viewed in a political rather than a religious light. The embassy, however, completely failed in its object. The army had, meantime, actually advanced ; and, in reference to this fact, a witty lady remarked, that the king of Navarre must be near his latter end, since they had sent him first the priest and then the executioner.

The Protestant ministers, on the other hand, were strenuous in their exhortations ; some of them were men of great eloquence—that most useful talent on such occasions ; they accompanied the army, and stimulated it to resist-

ance and firmness. The result of the war was, nevertheless, disastrous to the Protestants. Few persons could find pleasure in recording or reading the dreadful barbarities of which the Catholic army was guilty, nor the terrific reprisals made by the Protestant. The distinction of the principles which actuated each is, however, shown in the admitted fact that the great body of the Protestants, and their leaders generally, deplored and reprobated the excesses of the few who have left this dark stain on the annals of their cause ; while the great body of the Catholics applauded, as meritorious deeds, the barbarities which only a few of the enlightened or moderate of their party condemned. But we pass, in silence, over such details. Ambition, self-interest, avarice, and turbulence—an impatient and worldly spirit—had taken the place of real Christianity. Had this long-continued strife been purely religious, our sympathy might have been greater, and our condemnation more severe ; but engaged in it there was “ a mixed multitude ; ” the name of religion is a thing distinct from its power.

In pursuance of the resolutions passed by the states of Blois, most vigorous measures were adopted against the Protestants. The army of the king of Navarre was pushed to extremity ; the arms of the king, or of the League, were successful ; many of the Catholic nobles, who had joined the former, deserted from him ; with a little perseverance on the part of Henry III.

the Protestant forces would have been destroyed. At that moment, he offered peace. "The peace," says Sully, "which followed accidents so little favourable to the reformed, was the sole work of Henry III., who was desirous of giving this mortification to the Guises. War, besides, was no longer his inclination, which led him to a way of life strangely diversified by devotion and voluptuousness; nor did it agree with his designs, which tended to humble the princes of Lorraine, become too powerful by means of the League." Perhaps, at that moment, many a devout heart amongst the Protestant host might utter what the politician does not say—"Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

The terms of this peace, though not so favourable as those of the last, were far better than the distressed Protestants might have expected, when the moment for crushing that "hydra" (to use the abbé Crillon's expression) seemed to have come. The number of churches was diminished; Protestant worship prohibited within ten leagues (about thirty miles) of the capital; all Protestant cemeteries removed from it; the right of marrying refused to their ministers. Some desirable privileges were, nevertheless, accorded; and Henry was proud of his edict, calling it *his* peace. Disputes concerning the legality of marriages in the case of reformed monks, priests, or nuns, were now put an end to, by the prudent de-



cree, that no questions should be asked on the subject.

This peace appeared to be one of those critical interpositions which just saved Protestantism in France from being annihilated. Three motives are said to have actuated Henry in making it: his fear of the increasing power of Guise, to which the Protestants were a counterpoise; the possibility that the English would come to the succour of the distressed Protestants; and, lastly, but perhaps chiefly, his own love of ease and dislike of action. Unhappily, it was not more faithfully observed by either party than some others had been. But we must pass over a number of the events of this period.

France, long convulsed by civil war, could not sink into a salutary calm—when, in the year 1580, the seventh civil, or Protestant war, closed in a general peace. High and low among the people had too long indulged in the habits of a nearly lawless life, to settle down at once into the calm of peace, or follow, with patience, the industrial occupations of ordinary life. The conduct of the king, while it continued to lower him in public opinion, tended rapidly to advance the popularity of the duke of Guise, who was approaching a height of power unsuitable to a subject; and by energy of character, military renown, affability of manner, and magnificence of appearance, rendering the contrast between the princely subject and the monkish king both glaring and dangerous.

“There was no longer any such thing as speaking to the king. That prince, having retired to Vincennes, was inaccessible to all but his minions and the ministers of his pleasures.” While the vices of Henry III. degraded him, his absurd devotions rendered him ridiculous. He made long and solemn processions in honour of the virgin Mary; he walked in sackcloth with his penitents; he issued laws for regulating female apparel, and prohibited certain stuffs and ornaments. His sister, the unhappily celebrated queen of Navarre—who preferred the licentious court of France to the ruder camp of a husband, with whom she refused to associate—caused one of the couriers to be seized who was bearing these absurd dispatches to the governors of the provinces, and they afforded her an ample theme for loading her royal brother with ridicule.

It was in such a state of political affairs that the death of the duke of Alençon left the succession to the throne of France open to the Huguenot king, Henry of Navarre, the next and lawful heir. The activity of the League was instantly aroused to prevent a Protestant succession, and the ambition of Guise was stimulated to secure it to himself. The Jesuits were the zealous ministers of both. Guise was urged to seize upon a crown that seemed to await his grasp; but many of the nobility were opposed to him, or jealous of his pretensions: he feared, or was secretly reluctant to take, that last bold step; yet it

was probably the only one that could have saved him.

The cardinal of Bourbon, uncle to the lawful heir, the king of Navarre, was chosen by the League as successor to Henry III. He was more than sixty years old; the reigning monarch was thirty-four. It was proposed, notwithstanding, to get a dispensation from the pope for his marriage with the beautiful sister of the duke of Guise, the duchess of Montpensier, a lady of no irreproachable character. To all this the old cardinal assented, believing, probably, that he was acting as the interests of his church and country required, and not perceiving that he was merely made use of for the time for the purpose of excluding the Protestant king of Navarre, in order that the designs of the League and of the duke of Guise might, in the end, be attained. The desire of making Henry III. a monk was now as generally expressed as it was entertained. Pope Gregory XIII. would not, however, sanction any attempt to dethrone a sovereign so devoted to the church; and when asked to stand sponsor for the Holy Catholic League, he is said to have replied that "he did not know the mother of the beast."

The great foe of Protestantism, Philip II. of Spain, united with it; but policy led him to foment the divisions of France in order to prevent interference in the ruthless war he was carrying on with the brave Protestant Netherlanders. Urged by that fanatical tyrant, Guise,

under pretence of defending the church against its heretical enemies, appeared openly in arms against his sovereign. He kept queen Catharine still in his interests, persuading her he had no views which did not coincide with her own. Her desire for peace did not tend to counteract her son's voluptuous indolence and indulgence of imbecile pursuits, which led him to answer the rebellion of Guise with the pen instead of the sword. "He made a declaration so tamely, that you would say he did not dare to name his enemy, and resembled a man who complains without knowing who has beaten him."

Queen Elizabeth of England adopted another tone, and wrote to her former brilliant suitor to urge him to assume another spirit. "Alas!" she said, "is the cloak of religion with which they cover themselves so thick that one cannot see it is only to reign under your name, but at their own will they assume it? I pray God it may end at that point, but I do not believe it will, for one seldom sees princes live who are so subjugated. . . . For the love of God, sleep no longer this too long sleep! learn from me, your very faithful friend, that I will not fail to help you, if you do not abandon yourself."

But Henry had recourse to his mother, the indefatigable Catharine. World-wearied, and oppressed by the burden of many strife-marked years she might now well be, yet still we find her at her post—chained to the oar of a crooked and devious policy—toiling, but

making no way ; for every step that was gained, another was lost. The means she employed might prove the truth of the proverb—Honesty is the best policy. The hated Navarre was now on the next step to the throne, and the audacious Guise set her arts at defiance.

The king commissioned her to make any terms she could with the formidable duke, and to assure him of his friendly sentiments. Guise disclaimed all personal views or self-interested designs, and the terms he claimed were, an order for the immediate extirpation of heresy from the kingdom of France, and for the ejection of the Protestants from the towns they held. Some of the other stipulations made on this occasion, in the name of the cardinal of Bourbon and duke of Guise, showed that the proposed extirpation of heresy, or Protestantism, took a wider range than the kingdom of France: a scheme for crushing it, generally, was entertained ; the king of France was to renounce the protection of Geneva, and the ardent desire of our late queen Mary's husband was to dethrone her sister Elizabeth, and abolish Protestantism in England.

To oppose this brooding, but never completed scheme, a counter-league of Protestant Europe was at that time projected, in which the sovereigns of England, Denmark, and Sweden, were to unite with the Protestant states of Germany, for the defence of their threatened religion. The prospects of the French Protestants were now alarming. The king of Navarre was

their only human hope and dependence ; dangers of every kind beset him ; in the field of war, he exposed himself, and in peace, the assassin's hand was around him.

A traitor, who pretended to enter his service from that of Spain, was employed to shoot him. Navarre had intelligence of the design, and one day, when he had separated in a wood from the followers with whom he was hunting, he perceived this man approaching him on horseback. One of the most decided characteristics of Henry the Great was presence of mind ; perhaps the most useful endowment a human being can possess : he went to meet the assassin with a free and open air—" Captain Michau," he said, " let me try your horse, that I may see if it really is as good as people say." Taken by surprise, and unprepared for the intended stroke, the captain instantly dismounted ; the king got on his horse, and drawing the pistols out of the holsters, said to him, " I am told you meant to kill me with these ; but in the meantime I can kill you ;" and he fired them in the air, letting the mortified assassin go free.

When the resolutions against the Protestants, which have been just alluded to, had been taken, their heroic leader wrote to his friend and future minister, Sully, " to inform me," says that entertaining, though egotistical historian, " that the time he had foreseen was come, in which he had need of his servants ; that both religion and the state were threatened with the last misfortunes, if immediate measures

were not taken to prevent them, and that he should have constantly on his hands a most cruel war. I instantly disposed myself to attend him, taking with me all the money I could procure by the sale of a wood of tall beeches." The want of money was, indeed, severely felt, both by the impoverished Protestants and their chief.

As an answer to the proceedings decreed against him, with respect to his exclusion from succession to the crown, Navarre published an address, which, without making any profession of religion inconsistent with his life and character, was distinguished by that frankness and honesty of tone which were natural to him. He affirmed that he had no enmity, either personally or religiously, to Catholics, but that he could not become one himself until he was convinced of the errors of the faith in which he had been born and educated; that he had been compelled to adopt the external observances of the church of Rome in consequence of the massacre of St. Bartholomew; but that his enemies had always sought to destroy rather than to convert him; and he concluded this rather negative statement of his creed with a chivalrous challenge to the duke of Guise, to decide the national combat by their single swords, and thus spare the blood of France. The challenge was unaccepted; for though one of the bravest of men, Guise would not give the air of a private quarrel to a contest which he professed to carry on in behalf of the church.

The League extorted from Henry III. the edict of July, by which all the Protestants of France were ordered to turn to mass within six months, or to quit the kingdom. This edict was the triumph of the League, and the disgrace of king Henry. The king of Navarre said, that when he was informed of the disgraceful weakness of that unfortunate monarch, he was leaning his cheek on his hand as he sat at a table, and that when he removed it, he found the intelligence had turned that side of his whiskers white! Such tidings were, indeed, sad enough to fill a soldier's breast with shame, and a Christian's heart with sorrow.

The pope in the same bulls had denounced both the heretics and the Catholics who attacked their king; the latter, therefore, who were in arms professedly for the church, but against the king, were placed in a rather singular dilemma. Henry III. pledged himself to forbid the exercise of the reformed religion under pain of death; its ministers were only allowed one month to abjure, or exile themselves; the people were permitted six to make the same choice. The king, perhaps, lowered himself more in public opinion by consenting to pay the Spanish troops which Guise had brought to his own assistance, and to resign to his audacious subject several of his strong towns. An army was to be sent directly against the Protestants, and with their united forces it was asserted that only a few days, instead of six months, would effect their submission or



extirpation. The king of Navarre went to the Protestant town of Montauban, where he held frequent conferences with the threatened people. "Nothing could exceed the embarrassment in which he found himself at this juncture; without money, without assistance, he saw three powerful armies marching against him."

It was now, however, that the powers of a great mind were to develop themselves; the untiring energy, the dauntless spirit, that had lain comparatively dormant, awoke as the storm rolled nearer. The extraordinary intrepidity of Henry of Navarre, his numerous adventures in this war, the expedients he was reduced to, his apparently reckless exposure of himself, and his generosity to others, even to his worst enemies, give to the narrative of his life the air of an ancient romance. Such a history as ours cannot, however, linger on these themes.

To aid the miseries of civil war came one of the most awful visitations of Providence, the plague, to devastate a ruined land; it was the forerunner of the scourge which desolated our own metropolis. "Entire towns were depopulated, at the same time when all sorts of outrages were authorized against the Protestants." "I learned," says the duke of Sully, "that my wife had lost the greater part of her domestics by it, and that fear had caused her to fly into a neighbouring forest, where she spent two days and nights in her coach."

Henry III. undertook this war of extermina-

tion contrary to his inclination, his judgment, and his conscience. Fear of the League, and of its chief, forced him to it. When he called for supplies for carrying it on, he said the war had been decided on in churches and shops, and, therefore, the trades and clergy must bear its expenses. He told the cardinal of Guise that for the first month he hoped to avoid calling on the purses of the clergy, as he would first empty the pockets of the other classes; and when an attempt at expostulation was made, he cut it short, saying, "If you do not like to bear the expenses of the religious wars you cause, you ought to have kept the peace; I fear now, that while we think to put an end to preaching, we may endanger the mass."

Henry was thus thought to be inclined towards the Protestants, and in secret alliance with the king of Navarre. Such a suspicion was favourable to the views of the League. Public jealousy against the maligned Protestants was exasperated, and popular animosity against their leaders was fully aroused by the papal bull of excommunication, fulminated by Sixtus v. against the king of Navarre and prince de Condé, in which the former was declared to have forfeited, by his heresy, all right and title to the throne of France, or to those of any other throne. The parliament of Paris, however, not from partiality to the king of Navarre, but from jealousy of the usurpation of authority by the papal power, refused to admit the publication of the bull.

The king of Navarre did more ; in his own way, he excommunicated the pope. The following is an abridgment of his protest against Sixtus v.:—" Henry, by the grace of God, king of Navarre, sovereign of Bearn, first peer and prince of France, protests against the declaration and excommunication of Sixtus v., calling himself pope. Maintains that his words are false, and appeals against them as abusive to the peers of France, of whom he is chief. . . . As touching the crime of heresy, whereof he is accused, he maintains that Sixtus v., styling himself pope, has falsely and maliciously lied ; and that he is heretic, which he will prove in any free council lawfully established ; to which, if Sixtus v. will not submit, as he is bound by the canons to do, he, the king of Navarre, holds him to be Antichrist, and heretic, and as such declares against him perpetual and irreconcilable war. . . . Also, he prays all allies and confederates of the crown of France to join him in opposing the tyranny and usurpation of the said pope, and of the leagued conspirators of France, enemies of God, of the state, the king, and the peace of all Christendom."

To this the prince de Condé affixed his assent : " Inasmuch protests Henry de Bourbon, prince de Condé." This determined reply to the papal excommunication was not only circulated through France, but sent to Italy, published in Rome, and affixed to the doors of the pope's palace, and to those of the chief cardinals.

Sixtus was at first very angry ; but he was a

pope who has been said to have been as well adapted to wear a coat-of-mail as the frock of a monk, and as well suited to govern a kingdom as a church. He admired genius, and respected great minds; he spoke of Henry of Navarre and Elizabeth of England as being the two sovereigns most worthy of admiration. The former, when Henry iv., lamented the death of "Sixtus v., calling himself pope," as causing the loss to him of one of his most useful friends. Boldness and honesty in speaking what is believed to be the truth, are generally well received by liberal minds. Sixtus v., however, had been an inquisitor, and could not, openly, be inimical to the spirit of bigotry and persecution; at this time, he sanctioned the proceedings of the League, whose secular designs he did not at first perceive.

The six months accorded for the *instruction*, as it was termed, of Protestants, or, in other words, for deciding on a choice between making a false profession and embracing exile or death, were not allowed to expire before the king was obliged to issue orders to the governors of the provinces to enforce their immediate submission to the church; and persecution, in its usual rage, was once more let loose, while the civil war continued.

## CHAPTER III.

HENRY III.

PART III.

“THERE were moments when Henry III., indignant at the shameful part which the League made him perform, earnestly wished to find some means of avenging himself. But he wanted to do this without danger, and for that reason rejected the idea of calling in the king of Navarre, and uniting with him.”

At this awful crisis, when persecution was raging against the better portion of his people—when the sword was passing through the land—when pestilence was co-operating with the spirit of persecution—when famine was raising its ghastly face, and the crown tottered on his own head—the ludicrous appearance of the French king is described by Sully, who, at much risk to himself, had gone on a mission to the court, to discuss the possibility of his alliance with the Protestant king of Navarre, without the condition of a change of religion on the part of the latter. “I shall ever remember

the whimsical attitude in which I found this prince in his cabinet ; he was standing with a sword by his side, a monk's hood hanging over his shoulders, and a basket full of young puppies slung from his neck by a broad ribbon. He kept himself so very erect and stiff in speaking to me," for fear, it may be presumed, of shaking the basket of puppies, " that he neither moved head, nor feet, nor hands."

The ambassador departed, well satisfied on the whole with the results of his mission, as he found that the king and queen-mother were only deterred from an alliance with Navarre, through fear of the danger that might be incurred by a union with the reformed ; but he was led to hope that this fear might give way, and was commissioned to engage 20,000 Swiss troops to join the kings of France and Navarre against the forces of the League. His astonishment appears to have been natural when, very soon afterwards, Henry III. sent forth his army against his proposed ally.

" At this time," says Sully, " the persecution against the Protestants was at its height. . . . In the villages were all become soldiers, in order to pillage, nothing could save them. . . In Paris and all great towns, they were exposed to the most rigorous examinations which the zeal for religion inspired, while the desire of being enriched by their spoil made the decrees that followed be severely executed. I found my wife at Paris, only just delivered of a son, to whom I

gave for godfather the lord de Beuves, at that moment a prisoner of the parliament. The child was carried to church for baptism, for the worship and assemblies of the Protestants were not wholly suspended, notwithstanding the severe decrees against them. Several women were at this time burned in Paris ; I, myself, ran great danger, and escaped only by the surprising happiness of not being known."

The situation of the king of Navarre became now little better than that of a noble brigand. His small flying camp struck terror into the hosts of his enemies ; he appeared everywhere at once ; but his only hope lay in avoiding a general engagement, and, by singular activity and knowledge of the country, effecting surprises, defeating detachments, cutting off supplies, seizing booty, and performing such unexpected and gallant exploits as chilled the hopes of a rapid and easy conquest, with which the enemies of the Protestants had been elated. He also published an address, casting off from himself the odium of civil war and bloodshed. "If," he said to the clergy, "if war delights you so much, if you prefer a battle to a council, or a conspiracy to a discussion, I wash my hands of the guilt, and the blood that is shed shall be on your heads."

When Protestantism in France appeared on the verge of annihilation, the venerable Beza, drawing near to the end of his course, once more came forth as its spiritual champion, and travelled over Germany, animated by a more

useful zeal than that of Peter the hermit, to call forth the sympathies of Protestants on behalf of their distressed brethren. His eloquent addresses excited a great sensation; the feelings of the lower as well as of the higher ranks were aroused, and a German army was prepared for their assistance. The agents of Navarre co-operated, by negotiation, with the preaching of Beza, and Henry III. was filled with fresh fears. But the German princes, afraid to support a cause which bore the name of rebellion, lost time by sending an embassy to endeavour to bring that monarch to a more complaisant disposition. The royal falsehoods connected with the proceedings of the French court on this occasion are curious. To avoid giving a direct answer to the German deputies, Henry went off to the south of France, leaving them to waste their time in Paris, and sent his aged mother on a long and useless journey to the king of Navarre, to propose to him once more a change of religion, a divorce from his wife, who never lived with him, and a marriage with one of the family of Guise. The chiefs of the League, hearing of Catharine's mission, insisted on knowing its object, and Henry declared it was only a pretence to retard the expedition of the German forces. The chiefs published the king's declaration, and Navarre hearing it, was still less likely to listen to Catharine's proposals.

She had, however, several conferences with the Protestant leaders, Navarre, Condé, and Turenne, who were so fully aware of the dangers



that often attended her presence, that they never would enter her apartment together, but left one at the door, while the others conferred with her. Catharine insisted on a change of religion on Navarre's part, as the condition of an alliance with the king. Navarre repeated that they tried to convert him by placing a dagger at his throat, and affirmed that he would not renounce the religion he had followed for thirty years, except on conviction, for a thousand thrones. Alas! for the stability of all faith that rests not on the one sure foundation, the work of the great and only Mediator between God and man—Navarre afterwards did so for *one*! Catharine said, the king, his brother-in-law, would never allow more than one religion in France; to which Turenne, with a profound bow, replied, "Madam, we shall be content with one, provided it is ours, otherwise we will fight for it." This marshal Turenne was afterwards the notorious duke of Bouillon, whose ambition and restlessness caused, subsequently, so much disquiet.

These conferences ended in nothing, and the queen-mother was meantime much wanted by her embarrassed son. A formidable faction had arisen in Paris. The Leaguers would not believe but that the king was in secret alliance with the Protestants; their preachers declaimed against him from the pulpits of Paris, assuring the people that he had promised the succession to the king of Navarre, and granted liberty of conscience to the heretics. The

result of this aversion to the king, and partiality to the duke of Guise, was the memorable faction of Sixteen, formed in the capital among the middle and lower classes. It was begun by a shopkeeper and two vicars or curés of metropolitan parishes, and received its title from the number of its chiefs, who were placed over the sixteen divisions of the city. These men were entirely attached to the interests, and in the confidence, of the duke of Guise; but a combination so full of danger to his throne had been in existence a year before the king was aware of the fact. In the midst of such national distractions, balls, masquerades and every idle amusement or vicious pursuit continued to fill up the intervals of devotion, and the most anxious solitudes of royalty were evinced for the health and safety of a pet monkey, or a favourite macaw.

At times, Henry III. appeared to awaken as from a dream, and seemed disposed to exercise the authority, and assume the part which became a sovereign placed in such critical circumstances; but the intellectual gleam soon disappeared. On new-year's day, 1597, he met his "knights of the Holy Ghost," as the order was strangely named, and publicly made a vow to suffer no religion except that of Rome within his dominions; but at that moment he stood between two nearly equal dangers, and the people he thus anathematized were his only safe resource. The German army was advancing to the aid of the Protestants, and the designs of

Guise were too apparent to allow a sovereign to feel any sentiments but those of jealousy and apprehension.

Roused to temporary activity, Henry sent forth an army against Navarre, and dispatched the duke of Guise, with an inferior force, to intercept the German troops. His gay courtier, the duke of Joyeuse, received the command of the army against the Protestants. The first exploit of that young general was to massacre a Protestant garrison, which surrendered under the pressure of famine, and on the promise of safety. D'Aubigné affirms, that when he was sent to remonstrate with the Catholic commander on this barbarity, Joyeuse replied, that "it was the only way to gain applause from the pulpits of Paris."

It was this army which gave the derisive title of "the velvet siege" to another of its military exploits. Glittering in gold and feathers, they were opposed to the battered armour of the followers of old Coligny and Condé, men who had grown grey in this Protestant struggle, and were now led by the hardy soldier-prince, who had been placed at their head in his sixteenth year. Joyeuse, confident of victory, had promised Henry the heads of his brother-in-law, Navarre, and of his relative, the prince de Condé. The battle of Courtras, however, was to decide the matter differently. Joyeuse, before it commenced, forbade quarter to any Protestant, and assigned the punishment of death for the offence of saving any life; where brother

probably fought against brother, the temptation to do so might be strong.

The king of Navarre prepared his followers for the engagement, and closed an animated address with these words: "Let the authors of this war be those who perish, and the blood that must now be shed rest upon their heads." At that moment "the most virtuous and religious of all Navarre's officers," as Du Plessis Mornay has been called, came forward, and publicly reproached the king with scandalizing the religion he professed by the indulgence of libertine passions, charged him with having caused much sorrow and shame to a respectable family at Rochelle, urged him to make a public confession of his fault, and to promise whatever reparation lay in his power to make; warning him, that otherwise a defeat might justly be regarded as a judgment upon his sins from an offended God.

On the point of leading his troops into battle, as he was, the king paused to listen to the admonition, admitted his offence, and engaged to make a public confession of his error in the neighbouring church, and to do so when circumstances permitted in that of Rochelle. A minister then advanced to his side; Navarre fell on his knees; the whole army did the same; the minister prayed aloud for the grace and help of God. Joyeuse knew not what to make of the movement he beheld; but his lieutenant told him that "those people always knelt when they prepared to conquer or die."

"The battle," says Sully, who was engaged in it, "was begun before we had our artillery planted. The Catholics already shouted victory, and indeed they wanted little of being victorious; but at that moment our artillery began; it put a stop to the first impetuosity of the enemy; they broke, and offered an ill-compacted and ill-sustained body to the efforts of the king of Navarre, the prince, and the count de Soissons. These three princes performed prodigies of valour; they overthrew all that opposed them, and advanced victorious over heaps of slain. Their armour was all battered with blows. At once all was changed, and the death of the Catholic general secured the Protestants a complete victory."

Navarre wore a white plume in his helmet, as a signal for his followers in battle, telling them always to rally round it. On this occasion, some of them throwing themselves before him to screen his conspicuous person, he cried, "Off, off, I beseech you, do not eclipse me." He took several prisoners with his own hand, not refusing quarter to any, and is said, in the light-heartedness which seldom forsook him, to have "seized a cornet of foot by the collar, crying, 'Yield thee, Philistine!'"

The gay and elegant Joyeuse was killed. His body was found among the dead, and, with that of his brother, was laid upon a table in the hall of the castle of Courtras, with a coarse sheet thrown over it. But while the Protestants triumphed over Joyeuse, the Germans, their

auxiliaries, were defeated by Guise. He was at dinner, when informed that a large body of German troops had entered a neighbouring town ; his brother, the duke of Mayenne, who was as remarkable for slowness as Guise was for promptitude, could not believe he was serious in giving orders to sound to arms, as his force was so inferior to that of the enemy ; but Guise replied to him, " Let those who wish it remain here ; what I could not decide on in half an hour, I could not decide on in my whole life." He attacked and defeated the Germans, and subsequently gained a most complete victory, in an engagement, by the issue of which an army of 40,000 men, accompanied by 20,000 pieces of artillery, was cut off from the aid of the Protestants in France. Guise had three masses, contrary to the rules of his church, said for his success, the night before the battle took place. Such a triumph raised him to the very pinnacle of popularity, and the defeat of the Germans was far more adverse to the Protestants than the victory of Courtras had been advantageous.

They soon afterwards sustained another loss in the death of the prince de Condé, who is believed to have been poisoned by his second wife. The page, who was thought to have been her accomplice, suffered the barbarous punishment of being torn by four horses ! The princess was kept six years a prisoner and under trial, but without being convicted, and at last was acquitted on condition that she

should bring up her son, born after his father's death, in the Catholic faith. She accepted the condition, and the name of Condé appears no more among the chiefs of Protestantism in France.

The three Henries remained to pursue this melancholy struggle; the two Catholic and two Protestant chiefs had borne the same name, but the death of this prince left the other three to continue the troubled scene. The old cardinal de Bourbon said to the king, with reference to the death of his younger relative, "Behold, sire, the consequence of being excommunicated ! For my part, I believe the death of Henry de Bourbon is to be attributed to nothing else than the thunderbolt of excommunication which had fallen upon him."

The duke of Guise was now called by the people "our great man:" his name was a talisman which proved the existence of an extensive secret association: the gate of St. Denis, at Paris, was known to be kept by men to whom its utterance was a passport. He was styled "the defender of the church;" and it is said the pope sent him a present of a sword, adorned with representations of flames—the emblem of his commission. Sanctioned by such authority, the personal graces and natural endowments of the admired leader completed his sway over the populace. The smile of Guise was more powerful than all the majesty of the throne; that peculiar smile belonged to his race—it was the charm of his fascinating

and unfortunate cousin, Mary of Scots ; and when, arrayed in all the splendour of the courtly dress worn at that day, he appeared before the dazzled eyes of the people, his influence was irresistible.

But the audacity of Guise was approaching a crisis. Although at a distance from the scene of action, the pope perceived, at length, that more secular and temporal projects actuated him than those he had professed to have in view. Sixtus then exhorted king Henry to control this "defender of the church;" told him he should employ fire and sword against his rebellious subjects, and not spare the blood which was too impetuous in their veins. Catharine, too, who, in her mistaken policy, had encouraged the proceedings of Guise as a counterpoise to those of her detested Protestant son-in-law, the king of Navarre, now saw the danger that gathered round the throne of her son ; yet still she did not withdraw her confidence from the duke. The crisis drew on.

A conspiracy in Paris was discovered and made known to the king. Its plan was to admit by night, through the gate of St. Denis, a body of armed men, who, having surprised the royal guards, should make themselves masters of the Louvre, and secure the king's person, while their secret coadjutors among the citizens, most of whom were Leaguers, took possession of their several divisions of the capital. The king, on receiving this alarming information, was filled with consternation, and



summoned four thousand Swiss troops to the gates of Paris, to be ready to act in case of need; arms were ordered into the Louvre, which was put in a state of defence. The Leaguers, finding their designs discovered, and alarmed at the approach of the Swiss, sent urgent entreaties to Guise to come to Paris. A panic pervaded the city; rumour was busy, and the truth only known to a few: those who were not in the secret naturally believed the idea which the preachers of the League wished to be received, namely, that the preparations made by the king were purely offensive, that he was in alliance with the king of Navarre and the Huguenots, and meant to destroy his Catholic subjects.

Henry, meantime, felt only fear of Guise; as long as the duke kept away from Paris he believed himself safe; he took no proceedings against the conspirators; his horror of their supposed chief engrossed his mind; he dispatched messengers to Guise, commanding him not to approach the capital. With that decision which characterized his determinations, the duke saw at once his line of action, and, with the promptitude that marked his movements, he pursued it. He evaded the appearance of having received the king's message, took horse, and reached Paris before the return of the messenger.

Guise entered privately by what might be termed his own gate of St. Denis, kept by the Leaguers, and went directly to the convent of White Penitents, a singular establishment for

religious retirement, whither it was the custom of ladies of the court, when it suited their convenience, to retire for a season. The queen-mother was then lodged there, and to her Guise, in the first instance, repaired. But his arrival was quickly made known; his name resounded through the streets; the people shouted that the defender of the faithful, the pillar of the church, had come to their succour; terrified and ignorant women and children, not knowing what was really passing, cried aloud that the good prince was come to save them. There was but one step now for Guise to take—he must either head the people and defy the king, or vindicate himself by instantly appearing at his court. The latter was his resolve.

Catharine, without the delay of a moment, sent a messenger to announce to Henry the arrival of the duke of Guise, and to say he was coming to wait upon him; but, knowing it was safer not to allow her son time to deliberate, or determine on what measures he should pursue with his dreaded subject, she got into her chair, and, with the duke walking beside it, set off for the Louvre before an answer could be returned to her message. They were recognised as they issued from the portals of the White Penitents; the multitudes of Paris flocked around and after them; cries and acclamations rent the air, giving to their lowly and hasty progress the air of a triumphal procession. Guise walked proudly on, cheering the people with his smile. The king, filled with terror, was hastily con-

sulting as to what was to be done with him. An abbé of the church is said to have recommended the most expeditious measure, in the misquoted words, "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Henry ordered his guards to draw round the Louvre, and dispatched a messenger to desire his mother to retard the visit of the duke. But he had already approached the palace gates. It was a daring step even for that proud noble to take—unguarded and unattended to enter those gates; but fear, or the suspicion of evil being designed against him, he always repelled, under the erroneous belief that his power and his popularity were too firmly established for the king to dare to attempt his life.

When the queen and her stately escort reached the Louvre, they found the Swiss guards already drawn around it; their stern and brave commander, Crillon, looked gravely at the duke. Guise saluted him, but the officer did not return the salutation, and then that bold prince was seen to turn pale. But if there were a moment's hesitation in his mind, his confidence quickly returned. Guise passed through a double line of those formidable guards, and advanced to the presence of his enraged sovereign. In these days, when all the forms as well as realities of trial and of justice are maintained, it is necessary to remember that, at the time we speak of, a sort of justified assassination often took the place of both; and as Guise ascended the steps of the

palace, a lady whispered in his ear, that the propriety of thus punishing his disobedience was then being discussed in the royal chamber. He assumed his most lordly, dignified, and yet deferential bearing, and entering with Catharine the apartment of the gentle queen-consort, met his angry and irresolute king with an air that seemed to declare him free from all consciousness of offence, and expressive of some indignation at the suspicions conceived against him. "He had come," he said briefly, "by his presence to refute such calumnies." Henry furiously exclaimed, that "he ought not to have come, that he had sent him orders not to come." Guise submissively, but with apparent sincerity, denied having ever received such orders; professed his devotion to his king, and zeal for the good of the state; and prudently conducting the conference with the greatest brevity, retired from it in safety under the protection of Catharine, to the astonishment of the courtiers and of the frowning guards, who were prepared for a more violent result.

After his departure, Henry learned that numbers of his friends and followers had come also to Paris, and were concealed in the houses of the citizens. His fears caused him to order into the city the Swiss troops which were stationed in its neighbourhood. Their entrance completed the disturbance which it was intended to prevent. Those who had not joined the faction were indignant at such a mark of distrust on the part of their sovereign, and those

who had done so, exclaimed, that a Catholic massacre was now designed, and that their preachers were to be seized. It is evident that there was a preconcerted plan of action between Guise and the people, but the entrance of these mercenary troops afforded a timely excuse for all that ensued. The whole of Paris at once appeared to break out in insurrection; in the fashion still pursued in that capital, the streets were barricaded almost up to the gates of the Louvre; the pavement was torn up—the scenes lately enacted there might be said to have had their type in the sixteenth century, excepting that there was no duke of Guise to act in them.

He, fortified within his house, or palace, where a large supply of arms was laid up, refused, nominally, all interference, replying to Catharine's terrified entreaties to do so, that she imputed to him far more influence than he possessed, and that those who had caused the tumult by calling in the foreign troops were alone capable of appeasing it. But all the time his officers ceaselessly brought him intelligence and received his orders, the people were swayed by them, and he could have checked the storm he pretended not to be able to control, almost by a movement of his hand. But the unfortunate Swiss were the prime objects of popular fury; inclosed in a churchyard, they were left there to be the victims instead of the executioners of vengeance. It was only when told of the horrible and causeless massacre that was

going on, that Guise broke through his apparent neutrality. He sallied out on horseback, and, unarmed, rode through the streets smiling on the people, commanding them to refrain from bloodshed, and only to defend themselves. He saved what remained alive of the Swiss, and made them lay down their arms. Wherever he appeared his power was seen; he rode majestically through excited and turbulent multitudes, bidding them to be prudent, and to rely upon him.

Henry, shut up in his palace, trembled with rage and just apprehension; the ever-busy Catharine was the mediator between her feeble son and the formidable subject, who received her with all the calm dignity of conscious power. Without fear, and apparently without risk, she passed through the tumultuous barricaded streets. The queen's coach could not proceed; she was obliged to get into her chair, in which she was lifted over the barricade, and in two hours reached the palace of Guise. During her last interview, she accidentally discovered that the next step contemplated by the Leaguers was an attack on the Louvre, and the seizure of the king. Her ready wit and facility in expedients did not forsake her in the alarm she experienced. Contriving to engage the attention of the duke, she managed to write a warning line to Henry to make his escape; she then listened patiently to the haughty and firm, though politely-worded, proposals of Guise, who, amongst other things, demanded as the price of

the submission of Paris the post of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, which would place the army at his command, and promised in return to annihilate Protestantism in France.

In the midst of the discussion, an officer entered in agitation, and whispered to Guise that the king had taken flight. The duke in consternation turned to Catharine, and exclaimed, "Madam, I am lost ! while you are amusing me here, the king goes away to ruin me !" Catharine coolly replied, that she had not known his intention. On receiving her message, Henry directly left his palace, pretending to take a walk in the adjoining gardens of the Tuilleries, but went to the stables, where he finished dressing for his journey, and then escaped from his capital on horseback, attended only by fifteen gentlemen, "who had not time to pull on their boots." When at some distance from its walls, the king looked back, and breathed a malediction upon it, declaring he would never enter it again. He kept his word, and Paris was long without a king.

From this time, Henry called Guise "the king of Paris ;" he in fact was so : but though he had gone too far to remain a subject, he had not yet gone far enough to be a king. Whatever motive or secret reluctance restrained him from the last decisive step, the escape of the king caused him to lose the benefit of all he had done, the result of which was only to show his indignant sovereign the extent of the power which he neglected to push

to the utmost. This might be error in the opinion of politicians, but there was still in France some of "the salt of the earth," which was to be preserved by the providence of God for further use. Had Guise reached the pinnacle of his ambition, it must be concluded that his success would have involved the destruction of the Protestant church in that land. The king of Navarre, the lawful heir to the throne, must have been removed from his way, and one religion established in the kingdom.

The flight of Henry changed the aspect of affairs in Paris. The loyal part of the citizens were filled with shame and consternation; it was by that step alone they saw the reality of the danger that had menaced him. Messengers were sent after him to propitiate his pardon, and implore his return. Henry was inexorable, and the means employed at length by his more zealous subjects were certainly characteristic of the time. A procession of penitents was formed to try to soften the king's heart; their description is too absurd and revolting to be copied; passing over the detail, we will only quote a passage which gives a lamentable idea of mental degradation, at the very time when such violent zeal was manifested against the people who had forsaken these lowering superstitions to follow a more elevating faith.

"After these came Brother Ange de Joyeuse, the courtier who had turned monk the year before. He had been persuaded to try to soften the king's heart, by representing the



Saviour going to Calvary. He had suffered himself to be bound, to have drops of blood painted on his face, which seemed to flow from the head that was crowned with thorns; and he appeared to bear with difficulty a great cross, which was made only of pasteboard. At times, he threw himself down, uttering groans. Two young monks, clothed in white, walked beside him; one represented the Virgin, the other the Magdalen." When this impious procession reached the court, the former courtier was pretendedly scourged in presence of the king; but the brave Crillon, seeing who the monk was, cried out, "Whip away! strike in earnest! he is a coward, who has taken the monk's frock that he may not bear arms as a soldier any more." But this vile exhibition failed; even such a mind as that of Henry III. was disgusted at it, and reprimanded his former favourite for burlesquing such a sacred subject, telling him that he knew there were many rebels in that pretendedly pious train.

Catharine de' Medici, without fear, remained in Paris, and her art of persuasion won over the duke of Guise to propose a reconciliation with his sovereign. Henry was obliged to consent to the terms they arranged. As the conditions demanded by the duke were fully granted, a cordial reconciliation appeared to take place. Henry received him with open arms. The children of Catharine de' Medici had been brought up in the school of dissimulation. But he signed the edict dictated to him

by "the king of Paris" with tears in his eyes ; he steadily refused to go thither again ; continued to attend the deliberations of the state, but showed no interest in them ; spent the greater part of his time in frivolous diversions ; but, as had been agreed upon, sent forth two armies against the Protestants, and called an assembly of the states-general, to be held at Blois, October, 1588.

## CHAPTER IV.

HENRY III.

PART IV.

THE assembly of the states-general of Blois, A.D. 1588, has become a noted epoch in French history ; in its sequel it also proved so in that of Protestantism. The king and the triumphant duke of Guise appeared at its opening as friends and allies. The event was preceded by magnificent religious ceremonials ; a splendid procession was followed by the administration of the sacrament to all the deputies ; the two Henries partook of the rite together ; the cardinal of Bourbon, now declared heir to the crown, officiated.

The states, or parliament, was opened in the great hall of the castle of Blois. The duke of Guise appeared there in all the rank and glory of a sovereign prince ; the historian of the League thus describes his appearance : "The deputies having entered, and the door being shut, the duke of Guise was seated in a large chair, attired in a suit of white satin, the cape thrown across the breast. His eye pierced

into the midst of the assembly, recognising and distinguishing his servants, strengthening them by that single glance in the hope of advancing his fortune and greatness; silently saying to them, 'I see you.' He arose, and making a reverence, went out, followed by two hundred gentlemen, to bring in the king, who entered, full of majesty, wearing his grand order at his neck."

But all the air of majesty which Henry III. could still assume was now little more than a mockery: he was obliged to confirm by oath the decree he had passed for uniformity in religion: he considered that his promise, already pledged, ought to be sufficient, but when he had ratified it by an oath, shouts of acclamation filled the hall, and the deputies adjourned to church to sing the *Te Deum*. All this time there is no doubt that Henry had his own designs, and kept his secret thoughts to himself.

The taunts which his haughty rival uttered were duly reported to the king; the cardinal of Guise openly jested on his absurd devotion, and used to declare he would be happy to hold his head when he received the monastic crown to which it was most adapted. The duchess of Montpensier, his sister, used to exhibit a pair of scissors, which she said she kept for the same purpose. There were not wanting envious or malignant spirits to stir up the brooding hatred of the king's mind by detailing these insults, and commenting on the overgrown power of the

duke of Guise, and his assumption of almost regal state. But, to whatever point his irritation might push him, Henry's plan was laid with secrecy and cold-blooded dissimulation, worthy of one who had joined in the deliberations of St. Bartholomew's eve. "On the 4th of December, he swore on the sacrament of the altar perfect reconciliation and friendship with the duke of Guise, together with oblivion of all disputes, which he did, apparently, quite freely; he even declared, in order to amuse that party, that he was determined to leave the management of affairs to his cousin of Guise, in order to occupy himself entirely with penitence and prayer." Not many days afterwards, the final resolution of Henry III. to murder the duke of Guise was taken.

The infatuated duke was insensible to his danger, presuming too much on the power he possessed, and believing that no one could venture to attempt his injury. His mind refused to entertain suspicion even of Henry III., and he smiled at the fears of the friends who entreated him to leave Blois. On the 23rd of December, when he unfolded his napkin at dinner, he found a note within it which warned him that his life was threatened. He read it coolly, and in the presence of the company wrote on it the words, "They dare not attempt it," and threw it under the table. That evening he received a message from the king, saying he was going to the church of the celebrated "lady of Cléry," (or virgin Mary, whom Louis XI. made colonel

of his life-guards,) in order to perform the Christmas devotions, and should therefore hold his council at a very early hour next morning. It is said that a lady went that night to Guise, to persuade him not to attend that fatal council; all his most anxious friends joined their entreaties to hers, but Guise repelled, with a proud and scornful smile, both fear and suspicion; no one could give any distinct information as to what was intended against him; he would not, therefore, he declared, be influenced by idle rumours or unjust suspicions.

At a very early hour, he went to the castle of Blois; as soon as he had entered its gates they were closed. One of his followers, perceiving this, tried to convey a message to him; but admittance was refused. When Guise entered the council hall he was observed to turn pale; the warnings he had received probably came to his mind when he saw himself surrounded by the ruffianly band known by the name of the Forty-five, who, on this occasion, took the place of the usual attendants. He complained of faintness, and was brought some confection. A page summoned him to his majesty's apartment. Henry was in what is now called the old cabinet, and until lately a stain of blood used to be shown to visitors on the adjoining floor.

Before daylight that morning, thirteen of the band of Forty-five had been secretly admitted to the king's private apartments; he delivered them their daggers with his own hand, and sta-

tioned them in the antechamber of his cabinet. As the splendid figure of the duke of Guise bent in entering the tapestried partition of the apartments, the foremost assassin struck him in the shoulder ; the rest added their blows ; he staggered forward and fell, pierced, it is said, by more than forty wounds—uttering only some exclamation, which is recorded to have been either—"God have mercy on me!" or—"Ah! treacherous king!" His body was left to lie on the king's floor ; a cross made of stone was placed upon it, strangely combining ignominy and devotion. Henry issued from the cabinet, where he had waited for the accomplishment of the deed, and, admiring the fine form of his fallen rival, observed, that he was taller than he had thought : he spurned it with his foot, adding the words which the guilty duke had uttered over the dead body of the murdered Coligny, "Venomous beast, thou canst no more spit forth thy venom!" "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous : verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth!" The reward of a man's hands shall be given him.

The sycophants of the court joined in mocking the now impotent "king of Paris." The cardinal of Guise his brother, and the archbishop of Lyons, hearing a tumult, guessed the cause, and endeavoured to escape from the castle, but were seized, together with the duke's son and principal adherents. Henry then went to his mother's chamber, who was in her bed, indisposed. He asked her how she was ; and being

answered that she felt better, he replied, in a lively manner, "And I, too, feel better this morning, for I am now king of France, having just put to death the king of Paris." Intelligence of any deed of blood or crime could scarcely astonish Catharine de' Medici. She raised herself, and said, "You have killed the duke of Guise! God grant this act may not make you king of nothing! Two things are now necessary to you, diligence and resolution."

Henry determined on putting the cardinal of Guise to death, notwithstanding his just apprehension of the displeasure of the pope. But the men who had slain the duke would not murder a priest; four soldiers were next day hired at a large price to commit this crime. The assassins called out the archbishop of Lyons from the cardinal's chamber; he left it, supposing he was to be the victim; before they separated, they mutually "exhorted each other to think of the grace of God." The soldiers then told the cardinal they had orders to put him to death. He asked for a few minutes' respite; drew his gown around his face, and after spending a short time in prayer, said, "Execute your orders." His body, together with that of his brother, the lately haughty Guise, was consumed by quick-lime in a vault of the castle, the king saying he feared the League might worship the bones of Guise as holy relics. Their ashes were thrown into the Loire.

Detestable as was the conduct of Henry III.,



it is certain that the popularity of the duke of Guise prevented his having the power of trying and punishing him judicially, while the spiritual laws rendered his brother, the cardinal, superior to the jurisdiction of a temporal sovereign. This formed Henry's excuse for putting him to death by a private murder. The archbishop of Lyons pleaded that exemption from lay authority. He insisted that no one had a right to question him but the pope. The appeal was not now unto Cæsar. He asked the bishop whom the king sent to him, in what capacity he interrogated him. "If as a bishop," he said, "you cannot question your superior: if as a peer, it is a lay authority to which I will not submit. I thank God I know the privileges and authority of the church, and I cannot believe the king wishes me to disregard them." He was finally released. We come now to the death of the most notorious of the characters which have accompanied us so far in the History of Protestantism in France.

Catharine de' Medici only survived the duke of Guise a very few days, dying at Blois, on the 5th of January, 1589. She had gone to see the old cardinal of Bourbon, who had been arrested on the murder of Guise, and subjected to a long confinement as a penalty for the ambition of others. He reproached Catharine with treachery, in bringing her friends to Blois to be slaughtered, and would not believe her assertions that she had been ignorant of the king's designs, and was deeply grieved at their com-

pletion. His accusations filled her with despair; she was, in this instance, guiltless, but the treacherous and deceitful frequently suffer the imputation of deeds which they have not committed, and the crafty find themselves taken in their own craftiness. Catharine de' Medici had too deeply earned a reputation for falsehood and guile to be able to clear herself from suspicion. She returned from this visit ill, and died very shortly afterwards, from grief, some have said, at the death of the duke of Guise.

The life of that extraordinary woman ended as it deserved to end. Her plots and stratagems had failed; her designs for her family's aggrandizement terminated in their degradation, and in handing down their name and hers to the odium of posterity. On her death-bed, she found a life of threescore years and ten had been vanity, and its end vexation of spirit. She saw her last surviving son on the verge of ruin; his only hope an alliance with the Protestant people, whose fathers, or friends, she had murdered. She heard, and perhaps this was the bitterest portion of her cup, France, as if with one voice, utter the detestation which her imputed treachery to Guise inspired. "The horrible circumstances attending the death of the Guises," says a Roman Catholic bishop, "rendered it shocking even in the eyes of the Huguenots, who said it too much resembled the St. Bartholomew."

When we consider that up to her seventieth year Catharine de' Medici never relaxed her

arduous diplomatic life, and remember the powerful opposition she had to encounter from factious nobles, among whom the feudal spirit and system were not extinct, and from contending parties both in religion and in the state—we must believe that she was a woman of no common powers, either of mind or body, though it must not be forgotten that she waded through falsehood and blood to the attainment of many of the designs which she proposed to accomplish. But how much more worthy of admiration is she who, in her own useful, retired, and legitimate sphere, appointed to her in the providence of God, dispenses peace and happiness around her as a humble follower of Him who “went about doing good !”

“In the opinion of those,” says Sully, “who have bestowed such praises on this princess, it seemed sufficient to merit the title of politician, that she knew how to engross the conduct of affairs, and keep herself in power. But when we reflect that those supposed abilities brought matters to such an extremity that neither she nor any other knew what remedy to apply, it may be justly asserted that her capabilities as a politician were at least equivocal, and did not compensate for the faults she committed. It is believed that the fatal consequences which she apprehended would follow the murder of Guise, in which she had no part, and perhaps the stings of her own conscience, hastened her death. Her last advice to her son was, to put an end to Protestant persecution, and to

establish an entire toleration of religion in France."

Catharine de' Medici was a believer in the science of astrology ; an old tower exists in the castle of Blois, where, with her crafty astrologer, who at once instigated her arts, and was made to be her minister in their execution, being also her perfumer, or poisoner, she used to spend nightly hours in consulting the stars. "She brought," says Voltaire, "the science of magic so much into fashion in France, that some persons who were burned in Paris, from the sincere belief that they were sorcerers, charged no less than twelve hundred persons with practising that art."

This remarkable woman was beautiful, finely formed, graceful, and possessed of great power of persuasion : a useful quality, which she often exercised, was a singular dexterity in seizing on expedients, and extricating herself from unexpected difficulties and embarrassments. She was capable of enduring great fatigue, and delighted in violent exercises. She brought to France, from her native country, a great knowledge of the fine arts, especially music, which was more cultivated there after her time. Her policy, learned in Italy, was of that narrow, cunning, and treacherous character, generally named Italian, from being that which was chiefly practised in the petty courts of the Italian princes. Her countenance strangely belied her mind ; it was full of sweetness, intelligence, and vivacity, while, in disposition,

she was heartless, vicious, callous to the sufferings of others, and unscrupulous of any means of effecting her own ends. Her love or hatred appeared only the result of her policy, and were made to subserve her ambition; "the enemies she had been most zealous against, she loved as well as her friends when they turned to her service."

Although for the space of thirty years, that is, from the decease of her son, Francis II., to her own death, she exercised more sway in the councils of France during the successive reigns of her sons, Charles IX. and Henry III., than any other person, yet the state in which she left the kingdom does not speak much for her wisdom. If her decease were accelerated by grief and reproach, it was only on her death-bed that Catharine ever deeply felt; in her heart, ambition had closed up the avenues to all natural feelings. Even vanity and licentiousness, by which she used to ensnare others, had no charms for her except as they served her political purposes. The characteristic of her mind was levity; a levity which threw an appalling shade upon her crimes, and prevented her retaining any fixed purpose or deep emotion—love, hate, pleasure, pain, or disappointment, scarcely left a trace on her mind. The whole career of Catharine de' Medici, which now passes from us in the History of Protestantism in France, was that of a clever, crafty woman, totally devoid of just and moral principles, and of course wholly

insensible to the power and obligations of religion. She did not possess strong passions or great genius, and the levity of her character, which at once produced her heartlessness, and gave a more horrid aspect to her cruelty, distinguished also her variable and temporizing policy. Henceforth, we shall keep more steadily to the Protestant portion of our history.

Deprived of his ever-active mother's aid, Henry III. was left in a miserable position, and would gladly have sought the alliance of the king of Navarre, if he thought he could do so with safety while that chief bore the name of a Huguenot; and Navarre still resisted the proposal of abjuration, though it was now accompanied with the promise of being declared heir to the crown. A middle course was then proposed, by which the Protestant army was to unite with Henry against the League, but, to save appearances, the former was to be commanded by Catholic officers. This specious proposal met with many supporters in the king of Navarre's camp; he, himself, was strongly opposed to it; but his power was limited, his difficulties great, and his authority uncertain. The factious nobles, who joined the Protestants from political discontent, sometimes assisted, sometimes opposed them. His camp was not purely Protestant; many influential Roman Catholics, who, says Sully, "served him better sometimes than the Protestants, were both in his camp

and council." Thus, Navarre, not being able himself to negative the proposal respecting his army, the danger and treachery of which he clearly saw, could only thus address that council: "If I were assured that my sole ruin, and the loss of all that is dear to myself, could obtain your peace and safety, you should hear nothing from me; but the question being the ruin or security of the reformed church, and the glory of God thereby, I have thought it my duty to take part in your consultations."

The proposal was finally rejected. Many of Navarre's officers even advised his immediate change of religion. One of these, whose father, the friend of Charles ix., was killed on St. Bartholomew's eve, said to a minister, who was exhorting the king of Navarre to stand firm in the faith he professed, "If two or three psalms were offered you in one hand, and in the other the crown of France, which would you choose, minister?" The proposition was unfair; if, instead of two or three psalms, he had said, "your own soul," the answer might have been easier, and the question would have been more reasonable. But the question as it stands, shows us what kind of notions on the subject of religion Henry of Navarre was in the habit of hearing. The answer of the minister has not been recorded. But how vain is any answer. "He who trusteth in his own heart is a fool, and he who putteth on his armour to resist 'the

world, the flesh, and the devil,' hath no right to boast as he who putteth it off."

The death of Guise totally changed the aspect of Protestant affairs. "The king of Navarre, who had no hand in that assassination, gained the most by it . . . he never could have obtained the crown while the duke of Guise lived; and we are assured there were great designs formed between France and Spain, not only to extirpate the Huguenots, but to dethrone Elizabeth of England, which the events of the barricades of Paris and the death of Guise were alone able to prevent. . . . The death of Catharine de' Medici, however, did not allow Henry III. more liberty to follow his inclination, and unite himself with the king of Navarre. The League was not extinct with the duke of Guise. Henry had now the people to calm, the pope to appease, Spain to keep back, and all the Catholics to manage, who, after this execution, were entirely disposed to cry out at his irreligion."

The pope, however, foretold that the League would force Henry III. to apply to the Protestants for succour. He excommunicated that monarch for killing the cardinal of Guise, being enraged at such an offence against a dignitary of the church, but he secretly exculpated him for the same with regard to his brother the duke. This excommunication was every way fatal to Henry III. The pulpits of Paris resounded with calls to vengeance on the murderer of Guise, the defender of the church;



the green scarfs of the Leaguers were exchanged for black ones; their white banners were embroidered with black crosses. The faction of the Sixteen continued their proceedings in the capital; they chose the duke's brother for their chief, and his sister, the duchess de Montpensier, inspired them with new ardour by her harangues. This lady gave a striking instance of the power women can exercise by means of that "unruly member," the tongue. "Her tongue did more harm to Henry III. than her brother's sword." The Parisians set at nought the king's authority, and imprisoned his heralds. To stimulate the people, long processions of little children were made to pass through the streets, carrying lighted tapers to church, where they went to supplicate protection from heresy and danger. The almost incredible number of one hundred thousand children are said to have formed one of these processions. To the extreme licentiousness which mingled in other devotional processions, made at night, it would be utterly useless to allude.

A decree of the doctors of the Sorbonne, the great enemies, from the dawn of the Reformation, of what was termed heresy in France, now released the king's subjects from their allegiance, and the priests refused absolution to all persons who retained theirs. A violent preacher expressed surprise at hearing that any one could doubt the legality of killing Henry of Valois; "For my part," he said, "I protest

that I should esteem it lawful to kill him myself, even when I stood at the altar, and held the blessed body of the Lord in my hands!" Such was the position of the king of France, when he found himself obliged so far to overcome his animosity to Protestantism, as to seek the aid of the king of Navarre, for whom personally he had entertained no aversion. Navarre would not accept that alliance, so desirable to him, on condition of changing his religion, a step which good policy, as well as honourable principle, appeared to forbid. He was a better politician than divine. He could place no dependence on Henry III.; by renouncing the Protestant profession, he should at once make over the Protestant interest to Turenne, who was already aspiring to fill his place. Better motives would also weigh with him; he was the great hope and support of the Protestants, and, humanly speaking, his desertion at that juncture must have ruined their cause, as it undoubtedly would have ruined his own. The love and confidence with which their gallant leader had inspired the French Protestants, was manifested by the manner in which the news of his nearly fatal illness was received in Rochelle.

The iron frame of the king of Navarre had failed under ceaseless activity and almost incredible fatigues; he never allowed himself more than three or four hours' sleep, and often went without any rest at night, possessing that activity of mind, which sometimes, as a neces-

sary, and even fatal consequence, induces a corresponding activity of the corporeal powers. His bodily strength, however, was great; throwing himself at any time or place on a mattress, or on the bare earth, he could sleep "without taking off his jack-boots," and awake up at any instant he pleased. A violent illness, notwithstanding, threatened his life; tidings of his danger were brought to Rochelle in the same year which, as has just been related, witnessed the deaths of other eminent persons. The church-bells immediately rang out, and summoned all the inhabitants of that Protestant city to prayer for their defender and friend. The churches were thronged, and numbers were obliged to return to their homes, "to pray and weep there." Every day these public prayers continued, and grief and terror filled Rochelle, until the tidings of the king of Navarre's recovery changed lamentation to rejoicing. The Protestant ministers who, to his face, blamed his faults, and fearlessly rebuked his indulgence of sinful pleasures, or libertine practices, recognised his good qualities, looked on him as their own defender and protector, and anxiously sought to retain him in the service of their cause.

The remonstrance published by the king of Navarre at not being called to attend the states of Blois, where it is not likely, however, that he would have trusted himself, contains a brief review of the proceedings adopted against him. Its language unites the boldness of the soldier

to that tone of humility which gives it grace. He said, that in ten years, (during which time he had been at the head of the Protestant forces,) ten royal armies had been led against him and his cause, and had been dispersed by the hand of God. He asked, what end had been gained by the loss of a million of lives, and the expenditure of mines of wealth, but that of the ruin of France? He asserted, that he and his fellow Protestants were always ready to submit to the decrees of a free religious council, but never would be brought to sacrifice their convictions with the dagger at their breasts: what would be thought of him, if, while uninstructed in the doctrines of another church, he were to abandon the religion in which he had been trained? "No," he said, "that shall never be done by Henry of Navarre:" the reservation he always thus made, it will be seen he maintained, and the plan he chalked out for himself he pursued with the steadiness of a great, though a worldly mind.

"Take," he said, "proper means of conversion; instruct me; if you can show me another verity to that I have always believed in, I will yield to it." He also remonstrated against the practice of telling the people that if he came to the throne he would oppress them, or refuse them full toleration; and deplored the fact that in the assembly of the states of Blois neither clergy nor laity had once named the blessed name of Peace—the only remedy for the evils that afflicted their unhappy land; and ended

by declaring his belief, that if he once left the path of honour and religious integrity, God would withdraw from him the help he had hitherto so signally given, and suffer him to fall as he had seen his enemies fall.

Such is a slight glance at the difference in character and position between Henry III. and Henry of Navarre; the first, from an elevated situation, reduced to the lowest point of moral and political degradation; the latter, amid danger and distress, working his upward way, and by hardihood, decision, and intrepidity, winning the admiration of the enemies, who tried to destroy, the pope, who excommunicated, and the Protestants, who served him. Henry III. was at last driven to an unconditional alliance with the Protestant chief. "Nothing remained," says Sully, in his memoirs of Henry IV., "but for the kings to meet and concert their enterprises. For this purpose, the king of Navarre set out for Plessis-les-Tours. Agitated by some distrust, I remember that he halted near a mill, about two miles from the castle, and would know the opinion of his gentlemen on the step he was taking."

The king of Navarre had halted on the brink of the small river Cher; it was, indeed, an adventurous step to cross it, and place himself in the hands of a man who had so lately given an instance of the deadly treachery in which he had been so well instructed; but, after a brief pause, he cried, "Let us go! my resolution is taken." He afterwards wrote to the pious

Du Plessis Mornay :—"Monsieur Du Plessis, the ice is broken. I passed the water, recommending myself to God, not without many warnings that if I went I should be a dead man." Henry III. came to meet him. "The joy of a union so long desired had drawn together a vast concourse of people, so that the kings remained for a quarter of an hour within fifty paces of each other, without being able to approach nearer. They embraced with mutual satisfaction, and took the road to Tours together."

The two kings were in arms together against the Catholic League, headed by the brother of Guise, the duke of Mayenne. Mayenne attacked them in Tours: when the royal troops were seen on the walls mingling with the Protestants, the Leaguers shouted to the latter, "Retire, brave Huguenots! retire, white scarfs! we wish you no harm. It is the traitor who has betrayed you, and would betray you again, that we seek." And seeing the brave Chatillon, the son of Coligny, they cried to him, "Retire, Chatillon, we are not against you, but against the murderer of your father." Thus can parties change sides, and thus can parties speak, who have no just principles to guide them. These Leaguers had not only taken arms to exterminate the "brave Huguenots," but were seeking to avenge on their king the death of Guise, who was the actual murderer of Chatillon's father.

Chatillon answered, "Traitors to your country, I have no thought of private vengeance where the service of the state is concerned."

Mayenne was defeated, and at Tours, Henry III. greatly retrieved his early and long lost military reputation. The whole of France was now in rebellion. Marshal Sancy, amid great difficulties, brought to Navarre a large reinforcement of Swiss troops. When the king received this brave and faithful follower, he was seen to shed some tears. Sancy inquired if anything grieved him. "I weep," said Navarre, "because I have nothing but tears and promises to give in return for the devotion shown to me." By his advice, Henry went to besiege his rebellious capital; their united forces amounted to thirty thousand men. The skirmishes which took place beyond the walls generally occurred in what was called "the Clerks' Meadow." The readers of the preceding portion of this history will not have forgotten this "pleasant field"—the place where, in the early and purer days of the Protestant church in France, prayer and praise were wont to be heard. It was there that the king of Navarre's father, afterwards recreant to his faith, used, with his pious and stedfast mother, to listen with pleasure to the newly versified Psalms of David. On this spot, the egotistical duke of Sully mentions having been personally engaged when "a messenger whispered something to the king of Navarre, who called me, and said, that an assassin had dangerously wounded the king of France with a knife."

To pursue the course of this event, we must retrace the state of public feeling that led to it.

Voltaire asserts, that some priests had gone so far in their thirst for vengeance on the murderer of Guise, and the present ally of the Protestants, as to place images of him on their altars, which were daily pierced during mass for the space of forty days, on the fortieth being struck to the heart. The story is in accordance with the spirit of the times ; at all events, the declamatory preaching of these priests tended to prove that Henry III. ought to be "pierced to the heart." A superstitious monk was found to perform the action. Jacques Clement believed that an apparition visited his cell at night, and commanded him to kill the king. The story connected with this affair may have been a mere fabrication, which found credence at the time. Be this as it may, it is certain that the fact was actually written and published by a monk, under the title of "A Discourse on the strange and sudden Death of Henry of Valois, brought about by Divine permission."

The common people of France believed that the spirit of Guise was sent to Clement with a Divine command for the death of the king. He thought, himself, that an angelic being had appeared to him. The story is thus interpreted. Like many persons of a most ungodly, and yet most superstitious age, Clement was a young man of violent passions and strong fanaticism. His zeal for the League, and indignation against Protestantism, pointed him out as a proper person to execute the vengeance decreed against Henry. His brother monks devised the plan of



the apparition; one of them is said to have represented the herald of the spiritual world. One night, a gleam of light broke into the cell of the moody monk; a voice from the disguised visitant said, "Jacques Clement, I am commanded to appear unto thee to inform thee that the tyrant of France is to fall by thy hand. For thee the martyr's crown is ready. Be thou ready also."

The phantom disappeared before the agitated monk recovered his powers of perception. He went, next morning, to the prior of his convent; "a man," says the narrative, before mentioned as being published by the Dominican monks, "well versed in knowledge and in Holy Scripture;" and asked him if it were lawful to kill a king who had no religion, and abounded in vice. The prior replied, that we were "forbidden to commit murder, but that the king being excommunicate, and bent on continuing to be the scourge of France, he really thought whoever put him to death would do a righteous and holy act." He quoted sundry examples from the Apocrypha, the books usually brought as evidence by the church of Rome, and compared the deliverance that would result to the church by the death of Henry III. to the Exodus of Israel from Egypt.

Clement, however, spent some time in consideration, in fasting, and prayer. During this period, which probably appeared to his investigators as a renunciation of his purpose, he heard a voice cry to him from the altar,

"Jacques Clement, go and kill the king!" This voice was said to be a spiritual one, but it is suspected to have been that of a brother monk, speaking through a tube prepared for the purpose. When a fact is not proved, we can only state the circumstance as history has left it. But the particulars of the case, without these interpretations, are given as here related by the narrative of the Dominican monks. A knife was now bought for the young brother of that order, and was duly consecrated!

A few days before Clement set forth on his dreadful mission, Henry was warned by an anonymous writer of a threatening danger, but, with that fatuity which we generally see attached to persons in similar situations, he disregarded it. The monk reached St. Cloud, pretending to be a secret emissary from the loyal portion of the citizens of Paris, who wished to show their sovereign a means whereby he could gain possession of his rebellious and strongly fortified capital. The gentlemen of the king's court apprehended treachery; but, as the monk declared he would deliver his message to the king only, he was promised an interview on the following day, and sent to sup and sleep with the royal attendants. He indulged freely in the hospitalities of the royal table, and after supper fell asleep. A worn and dirty book, which he had been reading, was observed to lie before him as he slept, open at the history of Judith and Holophernes. The king received him next morning, in the presence

of two of his gentlemen, who would not leave the room ; but the young monk, insisting that he must speak with him in private, Henry withdrew to a deep window, where they could not be overheard. The man who had betrayed others was fatally beguiled himself. He desired Clement to deliver his message, who, kneeling, appeared to draw a paper from the sleeve of his robe, but as the king bent to receive it, he stabbed him with the consecrated knife. Henry instantly drew out the weapon, and struck the murderer with it on the forehead, exclaiming, "Thou wretch ! what have I done to thee that thou shouldst murder me ?"

The uproar brought in the guards, who instantly killed the miserable monk, and thus, indeed, saved him from more lingering torments, while they prevented any light from being thrown on the affair by his confession ; so that the circumstances here recorded would not have been known, but for the zeal of his brotherhood in publishing the "Discourse on the strange and sudden Death of Henry of Valois, brought about by Divine permission, he being at St. Cloud." "The body of Jacques Clement," it says, "was torn in pieces by four horses, but his soul did not fail to ascend to heaven. . . . As to Henry of Valois," adds the author, "I only refer to what is known of him, and leave his sentence to God. I pray God, the same may happen to all those who are opposed to the Catholic church, and who now unlawfully besiege us. Amen."

Intelligence of this event brought the king

of Navarre to St. Cloud. The wounded king was then engaged with his confessor, who refused him absolution, as he was under the ban of the church; but at last, at Henry's urgent entreaties, he consented to absolve him, on condition that he would promise all that the pope required of him. Henry, who was really what his religion implies by the expression, "a faithful son of the church," and knew that his title as king of France set him forth as such, replied, "I am the eldest son of the apostolic and Catholic church; as such I wish to die, and I declare before all men that my chief desire is to satisfy his holiness in all things." On hearing this declaration, his confessor absolved him.

When Navarre was admitted to the chamber of the dying monarch, along with many nobles who were anxious to hear his last wishes with regard to a successor, he kneeled in silence at his bedside, sighs and tears not permitting him to speak. He took the king's hands, and kissed them. The king took his head between his hands, and embraced him, giving him his blessing. He then expressed his sorrow at leaving France in a condition so deplorable, declared the king of Navarre his successor, and advised him to abjure Protestantism, saying, "Believe me, my dear brother, you never can be king of France until you humble yourself to the church, and become a Catholic." He also recommended that all settlement of religious disputes should be referred to an assembly of the states-general; then adding, "Adieu, my friends; turn your

tears into prayers for me," he caused all present to withdraw, and remained engaged with the ministers of his religion until the dawn of the next morning, when he expired without a groan.

Thus died Henry of Valois, the last of his line. The latter part of his life was certainly its best part. It has been frequently said, that he died in the very chamber in which he had joined that fearful council which concocted the massacre of the Protestants. If such had been the case, the circumstance would have been an accident; but the fiction shows the state of public feeling, then sensitively alive to recent events, and ready on one side to ascribe the miserable end of the last of the Valois to Divine justice, as the murderer of the Protestants; on the other, more justly attributing it to the vengeance which followed the treacherous death of the enemy of Protestantism, the brilliant and daring duke of Guise. If he who takes the sword shall perish by the sword, how much more, even from this fatal history, may we perceive that the wickedness of the wicked "shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate!"

In Paris, Clement the monk was placed among the saints: his statue was seen on the altars. The duchess of Montpensier waited near St. Cloud to learn the result of his enterprise; her joy was mingled with the regret that Henry III. had not known her hand had directed

the blow. She took the mother of the wretched murderer to live with her, and had her to dine at her table.

A Jesuit author, writing on this subject, says of Jacques Clement: "The assassination of the king obtained him a great reputation after his death. Murder was expiated by murder, and the manes of the duke of Guise, so perfidiously slain, were avenged by the royal blood." We cannot say that Henry III. did not deserve to meet his death in a manner consonant with the tenor of his life; but neither his weakness nor criminality lessens the guilt of those who instigated, effected, or applauded his murder; nor mitigates the danger of the doctrines which can so far pervert the natural consciences of men, as to make them call the violation of the sixth commandment "a righteous and meritorious action."

## CHAPTER V.

HENRY IV. 1589—1610.

### PART I.

THE king of Navarre, not believing the death of Henry to be so near at hand, had left St. Cloud. An express brought him intelligence of that monarch's approaching dissolution. "We set out," says his biographer, "well armed, for St. Cloud, but took care to keep our extraordinary arms concealed; . . . they told us the king was better, and demanded our swords, but Henry no longer doubted (of his death) when he saw the Scotch guards, who threw themselves at his feet, crying, 'Ah! sire, you are now our king and our master.'" As these Scotch were from the land of John Knox, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they hailed with joy a Protestant king, whom they were thus the first to acknowledge.

"The king of Navarre perceived that this was one of those critical moments, the good or bad employment of which might decide his destiny for life; . . . he calmly began giving orders for keeping every one to their duty, and preventing mutiny." An idea of the difficulties

that beset him may be gained from the previous statement of the same author. "The death of Henry III. would deprive the king of Navarre of the greatest part of his forces; he could not depend on the princes of the blood, nor on the nobles. I trembled when I reflected that this unexpected event might leave him with only a handful of his faithful followers to the mercy of his old enemies, in a country where he was destitute of resources."

These "faithful followers" tendered him their homage as king of France, but most of the Catholic nobles declared against Henry IV., except on condition of his immediate change of religion. One of their party was deputed to announce to him their resolution to die rather than acknowledge a Protestant king of France. The speaker assured Henry that he need not fear that his abjuration of Protestantism would alienate his own party from their allegiance, as all they desired was the toleration of their own religion, with which he could satisfy them. At this critical moment, Henry replied as he had done previously to the same proposition; his Protestant adviser, D'Aubigné, recommended, even on political grounds, the same firmness. He reproved the nobles for disregarding the dying wishes of their murdered king, whose death had inspired them with abhorrence of the League, and repeated that if, from the necessity of the moment, he renounced his religion, he should be guilty of a meanness, and no longer worthy of their con-



fidence. But, foreseeing, probably, the step he should ultimately have to take, he now demanded that the usual six months' instruction should be given to him, and desired to refer this religious question to a council. On these terms, he expected all loyal Catholics would give him their support, but those who refused to do so had his free permission to depart.

At this moment, one of his generals entering, knelt, and kissed his hand, informing him that the army had proclaimed Henry iv. their king. "Sire," he added, "you are the king of the brave; cowards alone will desert you!" On hearing this, most of the Catholic nobles tendered their allegiance, on condition that he should be "instructed" in six months, that the Catholic worship should be re-established wherever the Protestants had suppressed it, and that no Huguenot should be advanced to offices of state. It is generally deplored by their most faithful historians, that the Protestants did not on this occasion exercise the wisdom, moderation, and patience, which, by allaying the fears of the Roman Catholics, might have lessened the difficulties of the new king, and prevented his abjuration from being made an absolute condition. They were too eager to advance their claims, and to gain from Henry a promise of adherence to their religion: this led the opposite party to fear he could not be relied on, and caused them to stipulate for his positive abjuration. In consequence of his

refusal to do so instantly, several of the inveterate foes to Protestantism withdrew from his service. "Their desertion," says Sully, "reduced him almost to those troops he had brought with him, and put it out of his power to continue the siege of Paris, or even to remain in its neighbourhood. He was obliged to withdraw to the centre of the kingdom; a thousand dangers threatened him in the vicinity of a city where his predecessor, though a Catholic, and with a numerous army at his command, had not been able to escape a tragic end. . . . He had still more cause to tremble when he reflected that assassins were probably about his own person."

It was at such an epoch in his most adventurous life, that Henry iv. described himself as "a king without a kingdom, a husband without a wife, and a warrior without the means of war!" But we are now to see Protestantism in France under a new character. Until the latter part of the reign of Henry iii., it had unhappily always been placed in opposition to the sovereign and his government, and thus was not only made use of by the factious and discontented, but bore attached to its own defensive efforts the stigmatizing names of sedition and rebellion. Now we are to see it change its side, though neither its principles nor its party. Protestants are now on the loyal and royal side; they are fighting for, and with, their lawful king; while the more violent Catholics, opposed to his succession, are the

rebels. We can only endeavour to connect some of the leading events of a stirring and interesting period.

The battle of Arques, in the vicinity of Dieppe, was the first triumph of Henry, as king of France, over the army of the League. That army was three times as large as his, and so confident was its leader, the duke of Mayenne, of destroying his enemy, that he wrote before the engagement to the pope, telling him that he held the Bearnais, as Henry, from his mountain principality, was tauntingly called, shut up between his army and the sea, into which he must infallibly be driven. Henry, on his part, expressed equal confidence, but far less presumption. An officer of the army of the League being taken prisoner, and brought before him, showed surprise at seeing the smallness of his force. "You see not all my strength," said the king, with a lively air, "for you must also reckon God and my good cause which help me." "Accustomed as I was," adds his memorialist, "to see this prince in moments of danger, I could not help admiring his serene and tranquil countenance on an occasion so desperate; his manner was so composed, his ardour tempered with so much prudence, that he inspired his soldiers with the intrepidity of their chief."

The king's behaviour on this occasion was that of one who acted on the motto of his boyhood, "Conquer, or die!" He was eating his hasty breakfast in the trenches when informed

that the enemy was advancing; "he mounted his horse, and went to meet them." In consequence of the treachery of the Germans in the army of the League, who deceived their countrymen in that of the king, a desperate conflict ensued; Henry, cut off from his followers, was entangled almost alone in the *mêlée*, and when, to the surprise of his despairing troops, he issued safely from it, he cried aloud, "Are there not fifty gentlemen in all France who will die with their king?" The gallant son of admiral Coligny, advancing at the head of the infantry, answered, "Yes, sire, here we are."

A regiment of cavalry in retreat was arrested in the same manner, and led back by the courage and tact of the soldier-king. Riding up to meet it, he cried to its colonel, "Comrade, I come to die, or find honour with you." The victory of Henry iv. was complete, and its result glorious to him. The note which he wrote after it to the faithful servant of Henry iii. has become memorable in France. "Hang thyself, brave Crillon, we have fought at Arques without thee." On another occasion, he summoned one of his officers to him, in a note couched in these terms—"Put spurs to your best beast—come! hurry! run! fly! Such is the order of your master, and the prayer of your friend."

Elizabeth of England now sent supplies of men and money to Henry iv.; they arrived after the battle of Arques. The army of

Mayenne retired as the English vessels appeared on the sea, into which he had too early boasted of being able to drive the king.

After the horror that queen Elizabeth had shown at the massacre of the French Protestants, it is reasonable to believe that the coldness of her conduct to their oppressed brethren should be ascribed to the fact that they were opposed to the reigning authority, and in assisting them she must have had the appearance of aiding rebellion. That royal lady had too high notions of a sovereign's prerogatives not to hesitate on such a point ; but her alliance with Henry IV. was unaffected by such considerations, and we feel surprised at finding his solicitations for supplies so coldly received by that Protestant queen.

The royal army was in a most destitute state ; the descriptions which the light-hearted monarch gave of his personal merits are ludicrous, from the tone of pleasantry which covers the deplorable picture he presents. He wrote to Sully in this style—"I am near the enemy, but have scarcely a horse on which I fight, or a suit of armour I can put on ; my shirts are torn ; my surcoats out at the elbows ; my pot is often empty ; and my stewards tell me they have no means of furnishing my table." Sometimes the king took a good-humoured method of getting a dinner when he was left without one, and of revenging himself at the same time on an unprincipled minister of finance, who, while himself faring sump-

tuously every day, would pretend that the state of his exchequer did not allow the king sufficient to eat. Having heard that this man was entertaining some friends at dinner, Henry went to the house just as they were sitting down to a plentiful meal, and with great good humour placed himself at the table. The host and guests were obliged, from respect to the king, to rise and draw aside, nor did he command them to resume their places until he had fully enjoyed the feast, which had, in fact, been furnished at his expense.

At a later period, when he had gained possession of Paris, and his rights were acknowledged, though his treasury was not yet replenished, he said to the president of his parliament, that he only wanted to be kept as the monks were—clothed and fed: “Now, Mr. President,” said the merry monarch, “the monks have plenty; I have often not enough to eat; and as for my clothing—look here!” and he pointed to his worn habiliments. We must return, however, to graver matters. Henry had always maintained the practice, or perhaps we might better say, complied with the wishes of the Protestant ministers, in permitting the performance of the reformed worship in his camp or court; and, also, in having those ministers to pray for him and for their cause before engaging in battle. On obtaining the title of king of France—for the title was, in fact, almost all he yet possessed—these practices were not discontinued; writing to the devout

and faithful Du Plessis Mornay, he says, "I never omit the duties of religion wherever I am, so that seven sermons have been preached in the week by M. D'Amours."

After his victory over the League at Arques, Henry advanced towards Paris. His approach filled the hostile capital with dread, but produced no sign of submission. The preachers called the people to arms in defence of their faith, and zealously exhorted them to resist a king, who, though still professedly a Protestant, had certainly never shown any disposition to intolerance, and had even required six months' instruction in the religion which they insisted on his embracing. Monks and friars, however, armed themselves to oppose the Huguenot king; but their awkward attempt at performing a military salute killed the secretary of the pope's legate, whom they meant to honour, and the blunder excited great indignation. Henry withdrew from the walls of Paris, partly, perhaps, prompted to do so by the reason he himself assigned, namely, a dread of exposing the city to the horrors of a storm, by troops eager to revenge the frightful massacre of their Protestant brethren.

As it would be neither within our compass, nor altogether compatible with our object, to detail the various proceedings of Henry IV., we shall only allude to the battle of Ivry, as the most important and interesting of those which preceded the siege of Paris. The king prepared for that day, not only by his usual indefatigable labour,

taking but two hours' rest on a mattress the night before, but by spending a great part of that night in devotion with the Protestant ministers and troops. He knew, as a politician, the effect which religious enthusiasm inspires, yet he appears to have been really impressed with a better feeling than that of expediency, since he wished the Catholics of his army to seek, by means of their own religion, the spiritual preparation for the coming day which the Protestants were seeking from theirs. Many of them joined him in the devotions in his camp, while one of the Catholic officers jestingly asked the king to place at the head of his army that reformed minister, who had led its devotions previous to the battle of Courtras.

The conduct of Henry iv. in this respect is here recorded as apparently being the result of early religious impressions, and later religious associations, blended with the conviction, inspired by experience, that men are never so indomitable in combat as when they fight under the influence of religious feeling; but we do not mean to imply by this that Henry iv. was a religious man. His nature possessed noble qualities, but his conduct gave too many proofs that his soul was unregenerate, and his heart in that state to which the apostle refers, when he says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." One of his noble qualities was the power of freely confessing a fault, and asking forgiveness for an injury. Before the battle of Ivry began, he



went up to an old German officer whom he had wronged by a hasty speech, and said to him, "I wounded you the other day by my remark; this may be the last of my life; I know your value and merit, and beseech you to pardon me." "Sire," replied the officer, "it is true you wounded me the other day, but now you will kill me by obliging me to die for so noble a prince." "He did so, in fact," Sully adds, "for he was killed that day in battle."

Previous to the charge, the king came in front of his army, clad in armour, but holding in his hand his helmet, distinguished by its three white plumes. Standing thus, with his head uncovered, he uttered aloud a short and fervent prayer for the help of Almighty God; then, putting on his helmet, amid the shouts of his soldiers, he pointed to its well-known plume, and said, "Keep this plume in your view; it will be seen in the path of honour and duty"—

"Press where ye see my white plume shine amid the ranks  
of war,

And be your oriflamme to-day, the helmet of Navarre."

Then, "at the head of his cavalry," says the Protestant D'Aubigné, "he plunged into a forest of lances, and soon let it be seen what quality can do against quantity . . . with only a few companions he came safe from the broken and retreating enemy."

The battle of Ivry was Henry's greatest triumph over the army of the League. When complimented upon it, he replied, "Let us give the praise to God; the victory is his." It was

fought almost on the field of the first of the memorable Huguenot battles, in the wars of Condé and Coligny, and was as propitious to the Protestants as that of Dreux had been disastrous. Its importance to the royal cause may be judged of by the fact, that Sully says he saw in the air, the night previous, the spectral appearances of fighting armies said to have been beheld in the awful siege of Jerusalem. The phenomenon of the atmosphere was even at this later period little understood. Du Plessis Mornay also observes, that when the result of the engagement threatened to be adverse to the king, "France appeared to be upon the verge of ruin."

Soon afterwards, the old cardinal of Bourbon, long kept a prisoner, to prevent his being made an instrument in the hands of the League, died, and no successor to the throne was declared by that party in opposition to Henry iv. The Protestant and royal arms were now singularly successful; on this same day, three victories were gained. The king wrote to one of his commanding officers, to announce his victory at Ivry, at the same hour when that officer was writing to announce to him his victory at Issaire. The letters crossed each other. The king's was this:—"Curton: I have just beaten my enemies on the plains of Ivry, etc. This 14th of March, nine o'clock in the evening.—Henry." The officer's was as follows:—"Sire: I have just beaten your enemies on the plain of Issaire, etc. This 14th of March, nine o'clock in the even-

ing." But Paris was still the formidable obstacle in the road of Henry iv. Till it was gained, he was still a king without a kingdom. When he again drew his army round its walls, every preparation for defence and resistance had been made by the citizens. The duke of Parma had been called from Italy to the defence of the Holy Union ; fresh supplies were solicited and obtained from Spain ; a decree was passed, declaring all persons who acknowledged Henry of Navarre as king of France to be guilty of treason, and some people accused of having held communication with him were actually drowned in the Seine. Upwards of one thousand monks and priests paraded the streets in armour, with a bishop at their head. The motley aspect of these religious-military bands was curious ; bare-footed monks wore breast-pieces over their frocks, and the helmet of the soldier was united to the robes of the priest.

The history of the siege of Paris is a painful and singular one in that of religious war. If we honour the Protestants of Rochelle for so long resisting the horrors of the siege to which their enemies subjected them, we must not refuse to honour, in the degree they appear to have deserved, those enemies who subjected themselves to the same. But the difference of our feelings must be proportioned to the distinction in the cause and circumstances which affected each. Henry iv., who, in pursuit of his just rights, besieged his capital, was a humane, tolerant, and equitable prince, who was even accused by

the Protestants of too much liberality towards Catholics; he wished to restore peace to a miserable land, and to do justice to all his subjects; his whole life declared him to be free, not only from the spirit of bigotry, but from that of religious prejudice. Had the Parisians at once received and trusted him, no one, judging from his after conduct, has ever asserted that they would have been deceived. The Protestants of Rochelle held out to the direst extremes of famine and pestilence, because they wanted liberty to worship God as they believed it right to worship, and that liberty was positively refused to them, and because they knew their religion was proscribed at the risk of incurring the penalties which fire, sword, or forfeiture of property, could inflict. The Parisians, on the other hand, under the influence of fanatical preachers and turbulent rulers, endured equal distresses, because they would not accept a legitimate sovereign who was not a member of the church of Rome.

Henry drew his troops round the city; all supplies were cut off. Famine—the direst of human ills, under the pressure of which all that is intellectual, all that is spiritual, appears lost in the sense of that which is material—stalked in its most gaunt and horrid form throughout the streets of Paris, and there were exhibited within its walls scenes scarcely surpassed by those recorded of ancient Jerusalem. But the wretched people, controlled only by the powerful influence of their rulers, spiritual and

temporal, rejected the money thrown to them, exclaiming, that they could not eat silver ; and while they yielded obedience to the decree that forbade submission to a Protestant king, they exposed the selfishness of the men who most violently opposed him, by breaking into the convents and monasteries, in which good stores of corn and biscuit were found laid up. When all dogs, cats, and even rats, were devoured, the duchess of Montpensier was offered a large amount of jewels in exchange for her pet lap-dog, but she said she must reserve it for her own use. One of her ladies died of hunger.

The most horrible expedient of this awful time was that of grinding the bones of the cemeteries into a sort of flour, and kneading up a horrible paste with bran, or even chaff. But, alas ! the hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children ! And in this extremity the preachers of Paris forbade, under pain of the last spiritual and temporal punishments, all proposition of surrender to a heretic king. The most grotesque processions continued to be made by monks and priests, representing religious knights, having their robes arranged so as to admit of an attempt at military costume, and their cowls thrown back to allow place for a helmet. Prayers and promises at the shrine of the Virgin were liberally added to these military demonstrations. " The excess of this misery and famine," says Sully, " I must pass over, as I cannot yet think of it without horror. The king, naturally compassionate,

was touched ; he could not bear to see this city, the empire of which was destined to him by Providence, become one vast cemetery. He underhandedly permitted everything that could tend to its relief, and shut his eyes to the supplies of provisions which his officers and soldiers suffered to enter, either out of compassion to their friends and relatives, or to make them be sold at a high price."

In the space of one month, thirty thousand people died of starvation, rather than yield to this king ! Many of the miserable citizens, actuated by more moderate feelings, got over the walls, and disregarding the threat of punishment, threw themselves on his mercy. When Henry was remonstrated with for letting a vast number of them pass freely through his camp, he replied, "I am their father and their king. I cannot hear of their misery without being touched to the bottom of my soul ; I must help them. I cannot prevent the furious and refractory from perishing if they will, but to those who seek my mercy I must open my arms." Who can repeat these words without thinking of the Father and King of all men, who thus speaks and acts towards his rebellious creatures ; who opens the arms of his mercy to all who seek it ; who willet not the death of a sinner ; who says, even to the furious and refractory, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life ?"

But neither kindness, nor danger, nor famine, nor pestilence, nor the sword, could induce

bigotry and faction to yield; and on the approach of the duke of Parma's foreign army, Henry withdrew his, and moved into the country, where, on a minor scale, many towns imitated the obstinacy of the capital. Pope Sixtus v. was now dead. When the real nature and designs of the Catholic League became apparent, he had withdrawn his support. He secretly wished Henry iv. to succeed, but dared not openly express his admiration of the man he had excommunicated. On hearing of his death, Henry said, "I pray God his successor may be like him—I have lost a friend!" A preacher of the Catholic League, on the contrary, declared, in his sermon, that God had delivered the church from a wicked pope—"If he had lived longer," he said, "we should have been obliged to hear the pope preached against in Paris." Thus was the pope condemned as "wicked" by the zealous Catholics, who were so indignant that the Protestants should apply to his office the title of Antichrist.

Spain was the active ally of the League, and four thousand Spaniards obtained admittance to Paris. The Leaguers, however, became divided in their interests, and "a house divided against itself" shall not stand. The escape of the young duke of Guise from the prison where he was detained after his father's treacherous death, tended still more to divide these interests. The faction of Paris set him up as the rival of the general of the League, his uncle, the duke of Mayenne, and proposed to marry him to the

infanta of Spain. These cabals among his enemies all tended to the interest of the lawful sovereign, Henry iv., who was slowly advancing towards his desired end. Yielding to his reiterated solicitations, queen Elizabeth sent her gallant favourite, the brilliant and unfortunate earl of Essex, with a small army and a dazzling train of nobles, to his aid, but she soon recalled their ill-fated leader. It is remarked by French historians of that time, and the remark is curious, as really characteristic of our nation at the present day, that the English soldiers observed the utmost order on the taking of a town, not even being seen to break their ranks as they entered—"Yet," says the writer, "they made a greater share of booty for themselves than our troops did." The splendid appearance of Essex, and his gorgeously equipped followers, astonished the war-worn soldiers of Henry iv., and dazzled the poor people of France. The caparison of their horses, the quantity of velvet, gold, and jewels on their own equipment, were said to have been enough to have supplied the table and wardrobe of Henry iv. throughout his whole campaigns.

Rouen, which the English joined in besieging, seconded Paris in resistance to a Protestant king; yet, strange to say, half a century before, Rouen had been as notorious for its Protestantism; and the siege it sustained from the army of Charles ix. may be recollected by our readers. It was remembered by the people of Rouen at the time; and, in answer to the



summons of the king, requiring them to acknowledge their sovereign, they replied that the Catholics of Rouen had not now less zeal to maintain their faith, than those of the new religion had formerly shown in contending for their heresy, and that they were stedfastly resolved to die rather than submit to a heretic sovereign. Such circumstances as this, and such strenuous resolutions expressed to the king, undoubtedly served to prepare the way for the step he was to take in abjuring Protestantism.

We cannot deny that every other means was first tried by Henry iv. Du Plessis Mornay was sent to the court of England, with an urgent request for Protestant aid. He thus closed his letter to his ambassador: "I address her majesty a few words as to the consequences dependent on my success, not only to myself, but to all Christendom." That there was a strong desire in such a mind as that of Henry iv. to achieve success, without yielding to the derogatory measure imposed upon him by bigotry and faction, there is no reason to doubt; but Elizabeth, who had recalled Essex for the weakest of all reasons, would not yield to the solicitations of Henry or his ambassador, and for two months delayed sending any reinforcement to the embarrassed king. In fact, that clever queen looked for an equivalent for her services; the recovery of Calais was her object; and when that town was taken by the Spaniards, she very liberally

caused it to be suggested to Henry iv., that she would retake it provided she might retain it. The king replied, that he thanked her majesty, but would rather be robbed by his enemies than by his friends. Thus was Henry left nearly alone by her to contend against the old enemy of England, Philip of Spain. By the schemes of the Leaguers, and by means of political marriages, France would soon have passed under the domination of Spain, and Protestantism in that kingdom would have been extinct. Years of conflict had not extinguished the singular animosity of bigotry. "The Catholics said openly, that Heaven would never favour Henry's party while he continued a heretic, and that they exposed themselves to the Divine malediction by associating with his reprobate body. Thus animated by their zeal, they proceeded to form a design for taking up all Protestants who had been interred with Catholics, and leaving their bodies exposed for the crows."

Yet the same man who recorded this religious animosity, afterwards mentions his own advice to the king to turn Roman Catholic, on the ground that all religions were much alike, and that any might be advantageously followed for public or private good. "It seemed to me," says the worldly-wise duke of Sully, "that one who, from a Protestant, became a Catholic, or from a Catholic became a Protestant, did not change his religion, but followed, for the interest of religion itself, that practice in

which policy alone had made them to differ." It was a Protestant, and one who resisted all solicitations to abjure his own profession of faith, who thus wrote, and who himself records the advice which he gave his sovereign. Jealous Protestant authors are in the habit of condemning Henry IV. as an apostate, without, perhaps, duly considering his circumstances. Sully details the reasons he placed before himself previous to advising his royal master to the step he took. "I asked myself—Must the miseries of France be perpetuated, by giving arms, perhaps for an age, to two parties in religion now equal? Must a prince, who so well deserved to be happy, consume his whole existence amid the horrors and toils of war, which allowed him not a minute to breathe?"

"On the other hand, ought I to expose the whole body of Protestants in France, who sought only justice and peace, to be the victims of a human policy, and left at the mercy of their cruel enemies? . . . . . When all was thoroughly examined, it appeared to me necessary to prefer that which would put an end to civil war, restore peace to France, submit it to a good king, and put it in a condition to resist foreign foes. In a word, I resolved to prevail upon the king to turn Roman Catholic, and to persuade him to this by degrees; I was sensible that I should disgust two classes of persons, the Protestant neighbours of France, and the French Calvinists. But, as to the first, France, when

united in itself, had no need of foreign aid ; and it was easy to give the second such advantages as should make them regard the change without murmuring. With respect to the king's conduct to them, I depended on the gratitude which such a man as Henry must feel for persons to whom he was under the greatest obligations. I was absorbed in these reflections when the king arrived at Nantes, and sent for me to come to him with the usual precautions. Henry described his situation to his politic adviser, representing to him 'the conflicting interests of the princes and nobles of the kingdom; their hatred of each other and of him ; mutiny and disobedience in all minds ; inactivity in foreign allies ; intrigues and animosity of foreign foes ; treachery within, and violence without.' The end of this prophetic discourse was to know what remedy I could propose for all this."

Sully then details, in a not very lucid manner, the artful method he used for bringing about his proposal that Henry iv. should embrace the Roman Catholic faith ; suggesting three answers to his demand, two of which he himself proved could offer no remedy for the evils he stated, and the third of which was, that he should remove all obstacles by turning Roman Catholic. "On this," says Sully, "I did not enlarge, but merely told the king that, being a Protestant myself, I could say nothing on that subject. . . . As I was speaking," continues the politician, "I saw the perplexity

into which the present conjuncture had thrown the king increase more and more; I did not doubt that a review of his circumstances would lead him to the mind I wished. He said that, on one hand, he saw by remaining in the profession of Protestantism, he should have all the princes of the blood and the nobles arrayed against him, while on the other side, by deserting Protestantism, he feared the designs of his colleague, Turenne, now duke of Bouillon, who aspired to be its chief, and the outcries of so many Protestants who were so dear to him, and from whom he had drawn his support, who would then elect a leader, separate themselves from his government, and oblige him to turn his arms against them. He ended by saying, 'I can never use them ill, nor declare war against them. I must always love them.' I thanked him," adds the writer, "in the name of all the Protestants, bending on my knee, and kissing his hand. The reasons with which he had combatted his change of religion were what alone dissipated my apprehensions, and confirmed my opinion that no other remedy could be found for the present evils. I told him, that no persons of distinction and merit in the Calvinist party would be so unreasonable as to take arms because of a resolution which mere necessity had forced him to embrace, while he continued to treat them with the regard due to their services."

So far we have seen the king's abjuration of Protestantism made a question of policy

only ; but the religious views on which this able statesman recommended to his sovereign a change of religion were these, which, in the present day, would be termed liberal. "I added," he says, "that the foundations of all religions which believe in Jesus Christ are essentially the same ; that embracing the Catholic religion did not necessarily include an obligation to persecute all others ; on the contrary, that God had, perhaps, disposed his heart to this change in order to give a new example to Europe, and one more worthy of religion itself, since the differences in religion had long enough occasioned the most tragical scenes in France, by the aversion with which the people were inspired against those of a faith contrary to their own, which was the case with the Protestants as well as the Catholics ; that he might remedy this evil by uniting both parties in the bonds of Christian love and charity, or, if this were impossible, prescribe to them laws so just as to make them both contented. Finally, I softened the king's heart by the thought of re-establishing, in a desolate kingdom, peace, abundance, and security ; and of meriting, by the use of the talents God had given him, the glory of giving happiness to France, when she had begun to look upon her wound as incurable."

How subtle is the voice which flatters the pride of our hearts ! "I am certain," continues the wily adviser, but candid historian, "that this motive was more powerful with him than that of his own quiet, which, however I did not

forget, and I obliged Henry to confess that his mind, exhausted with long war, required a situation less turbulent: he said, that my discourse had penetrated the bottom of his soul; that he would reflect upon it, and believed he should follow no other advice. In fact, at the end of three days he had taken his resolution, and he only endeavoured to remove the difficulties that remained. Some of these regarded his own opinions, for as sincerity and rectitude regulated all his words and actions, I am persuaded that nothing could have induced him to embrace a religion he internally despised, or even doubted of. A prince who never deceived men, was far from thinking to deceive God." Henry iv., therefore, appears to be much more scrupulous than his Protestant advisers. "Happily," says a Catholic historian, "Henry the Great did not adopt the neutral opinions of his minister." But, during his life-time, the zealous Catholics considered him a heretic in disguise; it was only after his death that the reality of his conversion to the church of Rome was insisted upon.

The king, however, remained firm to his often-repeated declaration, that he never would renounce his religion while uninstructed in the dogmas of another. "I have resolved," he wrote, "in order to remove, if possible, all scruples to their obedience to me, to receive instruction concerning the causes of the schism in the church." For "the instruction," therefore, of the king, numerous conferences were

held between the controversialists on both sides ; and here we come to a passage of Sully's memoirs, too lamentably descriptive of the fallen state of Protestantism in France. Persecution, war, misery, and confusion, had rooted out much of the good seed ; the zeal of early days had died away ; comparatively few would have exclaimed against the peace which was purchased, even at the cost of the king's abjuration of their faith.

“It is not surprising that Henry, who had never heard so much religion spoken of in his life, as in these conferences and continual controversies, suffered himself to be drawn to that side which they took care to make always victorious . . . . for all the Protestants, nay, even the Protestant clergy, who were engaged in these conferences, became convinced that the king's change of religion was necessary for the good of the state, for peace, and even for the advantage of both religions ; so that there was a kind of conspiracy to draw him into it. The Protestant clergy either defended themselves no longer, or did it so weakly, that their Catholic opponents appeared always to have the advantage. The abbé Du Perron was there in his glory ; with that soft and insinuating conversation, that vast fund of erudition, supported by a prodigious memory, he could neither be overthrown nor convicted of falsehood without the aid of a whole library. . . . Some of the Protestant clergy, who were most about the king, and whom he consulted in his difficulties,



formally betrayed their faith, or, by a preconcerted doubtfulness, flattered that religion which they already looked upon as to be the religion of the king."

Such is the sad result of making religion a question of policy; and such, alas! was the melancholy effect of long-continued war and strife on the once fervent, stedfast, immovable Protestants of France. But, though many or that body did, on this occasion, as Sully says, "formally betray their faith," or designedly leave an apparent victory to their controversial opponents, there were many, both of the clergy and laity, who zealously protested against the king's abjuration, or openly remonstrated with him against it. To a strenuous appeal from a faithful minister, Henry replied, "If I were to follow your advice, there would not, in a short time, be any king or kingdom in France. It is my desire to give peace to all my subjects, and repose to my own soul. Consider among yourselves what is necessary for your security, and I shall be always ready to content you."

Du Plessis Mornay, who, though a layman, took part in this controversy, afterwards addressed the king an earnest remonstrance on his change of faith. The laity, indeed, appear to have been more indisposed to it than the clergy; and, perhaps, the miserable state of want to which many, or most of the latter, were reduced, in consequence of the inability of the people, long impoverished by war, to pay them the scanty stipends on which they were de-

pendent, might prove both a deadening weight upon their own souls, and a temptation to yield to the only apparent means of restoring peace to a disturbed land. The secular leaders of the Protestant party, on the other hand, "were sometimes intractable; it was in vain to reason with them that, by their obstinacy, the king would lose the crown, and that, since it must be possessed by a Catholic sovereign, it was better for them that that sovereign should be one who had so long been affectionately united with them, and on whose friendship they might reckon. But they had flattered themselves with seeing a king of their own faith on the throne, and hoped that Calvinism would be the established religion of France. They thought it hard to be deprived of this advantage."

Henry left the discussions of Nantes, where neither Protestant nor Catholic controversialists appear to have done him any spiritual good, for all the proofs of a true faith were wanting amid the contentions respecting a nominal one; that is to say, the fruits of faith, by which the disciples of Christ are made known, were wanting in him, for the immoralities with which he has been reproached too plainly proved, that to the faith which purifieth the heart and worketh by love, Henry the Great was still a stranger. The question of forsaking the Protestant religion was with him one of honour, far more than of conscience; on the latter point he hesitated; with regard to the former, he asked a

Protestant minister if he thought he could be saved as a member of the church of Rome. The minister replied, that he thought he could. "Then," said the king, "it will be prudent in me to become a Catholic, for they say there is no salvation for me if I remain with you; but you say I can be saved by staying with you, or being with them."

This anecdote, in itself, shows that the king's change of religion was an act of expediency, and not of religious conviction. He saw no other means of obtaining possession of his throne, and of giving peace to a harassed, impoverished country, wherein the very name and profession of religion were in danger of being lost in the strife of faction. But while as a politician his conduct may be defended, it is certain that, viewed as a matter of conscience before God, a weak and timid girl, inspired by a firm faith in the Saviour as her only Mediator and Advocate, her only salvation, and only trust, would have shown more moral strength in standing fast in the faith she believed to be that of the gospel, than did Henry the Great, not erroneously designated "one of the bravest and most intrepid of men."

Henry repaired to St. Denis, almost at the gates of Paris, and there, still a better politician than theologian, summoned to his spiritual aid some of the preachers of the League, who had lately employed against him the thunders of their eloquence. The pope's legate

threatened them with punishment if they went, and the Spaniards were indignant at the prospect of the heretic king's conversion, which they apprehended would give him possession of the kingdom of France; but the priests, who saw that event to be at hand, whether they helped it on or not, declared that neither their conscience, nor the laws of their church allowed them to refuse spiritual assistance to any "heretic who declared his willingness to be converted." For two days, that is, on Friday and Saturday, an archbishop, two bishops, and several priests, laboured zealously to "instruct" the king, who, on the second, declared himself to be "instructed," and, to the great joy of the people, fixed the following day, Sunday, for his public abjuration of Protestantism.

At an early hour on Sunday morning, July 20, 1593, Henry iv. prepared for a step, which the historian who loves to record instances of noble moral principle can only mention with regret. A moral martyrdom may be admired, but not if it involve the sacrifice of moral feelings, of all that should be dear to our holiest affections or valuable to our spiritual interests. Sully, who, from worldly and political motives, had been its principal adviser, would not take part in the proceedings, but kept himself retired, as one who had no interest in the show that was preparing, yet manifesting the secret aversion with which he contemplated the triumph of the exulting ecclesiastics of

Rome, by saying to them, "The state of your affairs, your numbers and riches, required that you should prevail." On such grounds did the Protestant minister of Henry iv. achieve what the artful and cruel Catharine de' Medici and all the court of Henry iii. had so often failed to accomplish.

So great, however, was the opposition of the League and of the Papacy to a conversion which they regarded as a mere pretence, that the citizens of Paris were forbidden to witness it. The order was disobeyed. Sully, evidently remembering, with no sentiment of pride or pleasure, an event which, however expedient, certainly lowered the character of his royal master, says, "There was a numerous court at St. Denis; all was conducted with great pomp and splendour: I may be allowed to dispense with describing a ceremony which the Catholic historians will dwell on with equal prolixity and complacency." Henry could not consent to all the terms dictated by the Catholic party on this occasion: it was finally agreed that "none of the points of faith controverted by the two churches should be omitted from the form of abjuration, but all the rest should be suppressed as useless."

The streets leading to the church were strewn with flowers; the king walked thither attired in a dress of white satin, wearing a short black cloak, after the fashion of the day, and a black hat, and attended by the princes and nobles of the court; the Swiss and Scotch guards went

before. At the entrance of the old abbey church of St. Denis sat the archbishop of Bourges, on a chair of embroidered white satin, surrounded by the monks of the abbey, bearing the cross and holy water. The king was stopped in this porch by the archbishop, who said, "Who are you?" Henry replied, "I am the king." "What do you seek?" "I seek to be received into the bosom of the apostolic and Roman Catholic church." "Do you really desire it?" "I really do so." The king then knelt at the prelate's footstool, and said, "I protest and swear, in the presence of God, to live and die in the Catholic religion, to protect it against all men, and to renounce all heresies contrary thereto." Henry then kissed his consecrated ring, in token of reconciliation with the church, went in to confess, and then his absolution was pronounced aloud, and *Te Deum* sung in thanksgiving.

The joy of the common people was so great, that the king said an old woman of eighty years of age, standing on the steps of the church door, flung her arms round his neck, and kissed him. But persons of high feeling and Protestant principle must have viewed the proceeding in another manner. Instead, however, of calling Henry iv. an apostate, let us view, in this transaction, another instance of the difficulties with which Protestantism in France had to contend. The soul of that great man and heroic leader was destitute of the faith which alone could have enabled him, in spiritual

things, to "fight the good fight." It is easy to condemn, but hard to contend; therefore, says the apostle, "take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all"—yea, having overcome your adversaries—"to stand."

In requiring six months' instruction, previous to his nominal conversion, historians have not noticed the obvious fact, that Henry IV., while he thus preserved his own character as a man of honour, without bigotry and open to conviction, necessarily injured the cause of Protestantism much more than he would have done by a hasty abjuration. The latter would have appeared such an act of expediency as his going to mass after the massacre of St. Bartholomew; while this "instruction," and the controversies connected with it, gave the air of a real conversion to a political expedient, notwithstanding that the king himself declared that he had been told he could effect his salvation in one church as well as in the other, that his objects were to do justice to both parties, to restore peace to a bleeding land, and to enjoy repose himself. The conduct of the Catholics and Protestants on this occasion were strikingly contrasted. The latter were disappointed in their hopes; some among them were alarmed for their faith, and others, to his face, reproached the king with deserting their cause; yet Sully, who, acting only on policy himself, thought all others did so, thus expresses the nature of their conduct. "The Protestants

murmured, shrugged their shoulders, and did, for form's sake, all that seemed to be required, but they did not exceed the bounds of obedience."

They held a synod, and appointed deputies from their churches to petition the king to inform them how their affairs were henceforth to be conducted, praying him that the present truce to the war might be extended to a settled peace. Henry gave these deputies every assurance of unabated affection, and promised to attend to their affairs. And if, for nearly two years, the Edict of Nantes in their favour was delayed, the dangers which beset him, from his suspected heresy, and the turbulence of his kingdom ought to be taken into consideration.

The conduct of the party he had joined was less peaceable than that of the party he had left. The pope said, he would not believe Henry iv. was a Catholic unless an angel came from heaven to assure him of the fact. And the priests, fearing that, if he got possession of his throne, he would favour the religion he only pretended to leave, were as zealous as ever in denouncing him from their pulpits as a wolf in sheep's clothing. A Jesuit said, that Jacques Clement, who killed Henry iii., was then sitting among the angels, but another such monk was wanted upon earth for the present good of the church. Thus instigated by the authority of that church, a daring waterman undertook to kill Henry iv. ; he was arrested, and confessed



his plan, affirming that he had hoped if he attained his object God would render him invisible, and save him from suffering. The Protestants were considered to be the injured party, but no such designs were harboured among them.

## CHAPTER VI.

HENRY IV.

PART II.

THE power of the League fell away in consequence of the king's profession of the established religion; almost all moderate and well-disposed Catholics then joined him, and he obtained peaceful, though secret, possession of Paris. The citizens, who had gone to bed under the impression that he was their enemy, were heard at an early hour in the morning, shouting, "Long live the king!" He entered secretly, and with so little noise, that his troops had occupied all the strong posts of the city before the Spanish garrison was aroused. The Louvre had been prepared for his reception, and he even found his breakfast laid ready. Strange must have been the thoughts of a not unfeeling monarch as he entered those palace walls—for six years unentered by a king of France.

The scenes of his boyhood, his pious and Protestant mother, his early studies and sports with his young companions, the three Henries, of whom he was the survivor—two of them had met a tragic fate, and

that fate had menaced him—their brilliant youth, the licentious court of Catharine de' Medici, his wretched marriage, the hideous night of St. Bartholomew, his irksome bondage and idle dissipation with Charles ix., the miserable death of his remorseful comrade, his escape, his perilous course for more than ten years of constant warfare, his abjuration of the faith his mother declared she would rather cast him into the sea than see him abjure, his entry into Paris the acknowledged sovereign of France—all this must, in a great degree, have mingled with the pressing affairs of the moment; and the first act of Henry iv. was to go to the church of Nôtre Dame, to return public thanks to Almighty God.

Cries of "Peace! Peace!"—welcome sound—now echoed through Paris; the attempt to keep back the crowd, which pressed around him, made Henry say to his officers, "Let the people come near me; they are hungry to see a king." Henry issued a proclamation of general pardon, desired his Spanish foes to march out of the city, and ordered a few ringleaders of sedition to do the same. Some violent preachers were threatened with punishment if they returned. Most of what were called "the preachers of the League" retired to Flanders. Even the duchess of Montpensier was received by the king "in a manner as polite as if he had an important reason for sparing her the confusion with which another person would have delighted to overwhelm her."

But the most characteristic instance of Henry's method of treating his enemies was that of the tardy duke of Mayenne, the general of the League, who told the pope he was certain of destroying the Bearnais at Arques. That general, who was very fat, came to make his submission to him when he was walking in the beautiful park of Monceaux. Mayenne knelt to Henry, who, taking his hand, raised him, and asked if he would see the improvements he was making. The king then began walking, with the rapidity that had always marked his movements; the lusty general toiled after him, until, hearing him pant for breath, he whispered Sully, "If I walk this great body any longer I shall be more than avenged." Then, turning to his late opponent, he said, "Tell me the truth; am I not somewhat too quick for you?" The duke of Mayenne, who, the pope said, took more time to eat his dinner than Henry iv. spent in his bed, admitted the fact. "There is my hand," said Henry; "on my life, this is all the vengeance I will ever seek."

When the Spaniards, glad to get off so easily, marched out of his capital, he stood at a window to see them pass, and saluted them, saying, "Adieu, gentlemen, adieu; commend me to your master, and take care not to come back." Yet Sully asserts, that the king's abjuration had produced no change in the feelings of the more bigoted Catholics towards him. They bore with impatience his not breaking off

with his old Protestant servants, and murmured if he only conversed with any of them." The Jesuits were found to have been so involved in the cabals of Spain, that their expulsion from France was deemed necessary : this occasioned fresh contention, but the measure was decided upon in consequence of one of their students having attempted to kill the king. At the moment when he was receiving the congratulations of his nobles and gentlemen, on the prosperity which everywhere appeared to attend him, a young man, named John Chatel, struck him with a knife. Henry had bent to raise one of the nobles who knelt, and the blow designed for his throat only cut his mouth. Chatel was a young man of very bad character, who affirmed, that from what he had heard he believed the murder of Henry iv. would tend to obtain him a remission of punishment in the future world. Such was Henry's recompense from the church he joined. The Jesuits were now expelled from France, but the king had an influential Jesuit confessor, and by his efforts the order was soon restored.

Henry remained long unabsolved by the pope ; his protest against the excommunication of Sixtus v. was certainly sufficient to raise an obstacle ; and Clement viii. so long refused to accept his penitence, that a witty priest said to him, he thought if Satan himself desired his absolution, his holiness could not reject such a penitent. It was finally granted, and two ecclesiastics received the papal blows at Rome

as proxy for the king of France. One of them, indignant at the report of their having endured a severe castigation, published a declaration, that they had felt the lash no more than if a fly had passed over their clothes.\*

A war with Spain occupied the French ; the state of their country was that of the troubled sea when it cannot rest ; there was a lull of the storm, but the swell of the ocean was there. In such a national state we should have to look deep to find out that of the pure and inner life of the soul—the life of pure and undefiled religion, separated from the strife of worldly politics or private jealousies. The great praise of Protestantism during this period is, that its professors were quiet, and did nothing rashly ; though their historians have generally reproached the king with an oblivion of their requirements, and ingratitude for their services. These writers have, however, neglected to consider what would have been the probable fate of the French Protestants if Henry of Navarre had never joined them, never identified their cause with his own interests, or fought their battles with his own ; if he had yielded to the offers of the French court, and, on condition of being declared heir to the throne, had turned his arms and influence against them.

It is a frequent cause of reproach to Henry iv. by Protestant writers, that the proclamation

\* The ceremony of scourging must be publicly performed at Rome on all persons who receive absolution after having been excommunicated.

of the Edict of Nantes was so long delayed. His abjuration took place in July, 1593, and the edict of Protestant toleration was signed in April, 1598. But the king's excuse was, that, during the continuance of foreign war, any grant made by him to the Protestants would appear to both parties, not an act of religious and political justice, but of personal expediency; and it would be thought his need of these brave old allies led him to grant a favour which national justice might afterwards revoke. But when a conqueror over the secular difficulties and embarrassments of his position, Henry saw the formidable Catholic League fall away, and Spain driven to make peace with him, he could not be longer influenced by these reasons, and felt that he might, without danger, turn his attention to the neglected affairs of the Protestants. "In spite of so powerful a league," says his admiring minister, Sully, "including the pope, the emperor, the king of Spain, the duke of Savoy, AND ALL THE ECCLESIASTICS OF EUROPE, the king effected his designs, and closed them with a glorious peace."

The Edict of Nantes has become more memorable from its revocation than from its accordance. Its provisions—if we only consider the obligations of Henry IV. to the Protestants of France, without reflecting on the dangers that beset him from the jealousy of his Catholic subjects—appear to be very limited; yet they are more than are accorded to Protestants of our own day in some Roman Catholic countries.

Full toleration was at last granted ; but the right of public worship was restricted in some districts and not permitted within three leagues of Paris ; they were subjected to the payment of all tithes and church dues, and obliged to observe all the festivals and fasts.\* The chief political advantage accorded to the Protestants, was the long-desired privilege of having deputies in the chambers of justice—a privilege which tended little to their spiritual advantage, and finally, by mixing them up with the politics of the kingdom, gave a plea for the revocation of the edict. They were also declared eligible to all public offices ; and another privilege told a still more painful tale of previous oppression—their poor were to be admitted into the hospitals of charity.

They had claimed some immunities which the king refused ; but what he granted excited the opposition of the Catholics. Henry's policy in delaying, until his power was established, the edict in favour of Protestantism might now be apparent, for when the parliament of Paris refused to pass it into a law, he coolly reminded them that he had climbed their walls, and therefore did not fear getting over their barricades. This firmness caused the edict for Protestant toleration to be passed. "The king," says his biographer, "having thus paid them what he owed, thought himself not obliged to

\* This order caused frequent disturbances. On one occasion, the English ambassador refused to put the usual hangings before his house ; and declared, if any were put there in honour of a popish festival, he would burn them.



show regard to those who still continued to stir up sedition." The person chiefly alluded to in this latter sentence was Turenne, Henry's associate in arms, and now known in Protestant history as the discontented and ambitious duke of Bouillon, whose complaints, even at the courts of Elizabeth and James I. of England, have inspired some Protestant authors with the idea that Henry IV. acted *against* the religion from which they say he apostatized.

But while the effervescent spirit, so long allowed to vent itself, still appeared on the surface of Protestantism, the purer and more solid body was settling down into a state of salutary and long unknown repose; and to the discriminating eye and impartial judgment, the beneficial effects of the government of Henry IV. will be discernible in the circumstances in which the two following reigns found the peaceful artisans and tradespeople of France, who had indeed exchanged the sword for the ploughshare. After the general peace, and in the enjoyment of free toleration, though still vexed by partial disturbances, or petty persecutions, the lower ranks of the Protestant body settled down to the peaceable pursuits of industrial life; pursuits, to the promotion of which the comprehensive mind of their sovereign was constantly directed. The principal nobles of their party had gone over to the religion of the state and of the king; their zealous historians bewail the fact, but perhaps it is one that might rather be rejoiced at, by those who would

wish to see the peaceable fruits of righteousness flourish in a church, too long the prey of ambitious and factious men.

About the same time, many conversions were also made from the Catholic church, but chiefly from among priests, monks, and nuns. Controversy abounded; the pen and the tongue appeared the weapons now employed instead of the sword. The Protestant ministers, in their publications, freely exposed the unscriptural doctrines and practical abuses of the church of Rome, and a rather general desire for some reform was excited among its own members. From the time his abjuration of Protestantism was resolved upon, Henry IV. had formed, among other great but impracticable plans, that of holding a general council for the purpose of exposing and rectifying these errors and abuses, and thus so far removing the unscriptural character of that church as to induce the Protestants to withdraw their protest of dissent, and admit of a uniformity in religion being established in France, on better and more scriptural principles. The controversies now carried on, and the liberty allowed to the press in publishing them, appeared to further this design. Father Cotton, the king's confessor, and two other Jesuits, were the chief opponents; "the king's attention," says a publication of the time, "being rather occupied with the general good, and the embellishment of the city of Paris;" nevertheless, he wished to promote the discussion, the result of which it was hoped would,

by concessions being made on both sides, bring about the union of the Roman and reformed churches. The argument was to be reduced to the usages and doctrines of the church during the first four centuries.

The eloquent and learned cardinal Du Perron asked the Protestant historian and soldier, D'Aubigné, to give him forty years after the end of the fourth century. "I see," said D'Aubigné, "that you want to get the decrees of the council of Chalcedon in your favour; but you shall have them, so that you will let us begin the discussion." The cardinal, however, retarded the discussion, saying, that he must wait for manuscripts from Rome. This passed into a common saying with Henry iv., and is still used in France; when any one wished to delay a business, or postpone a duty, the king would say, "Ah! you must wait for manuscripts from Rome." Henry asked D'Aubigné why he yielded the additional forty years to Du Perron. "Because," he replied, "by asking for them he showed the first four hundred belonged to us."

The zealous Catholics were indignant at his permitting this remark. But Henry had little taste for controversy; he dared not openly defend the Protestants, but, whenever he could, he let their proceedings pass unnoticed, and when he feared they might break out into sedition, he usually employed Sully to pacify them. On the other hand, we find him always ready to interpose his authority in any case of

injustice or bigotry on the part of the Catholics. One effect of the controversy undoubtedly was, to rekindle a spirit of animosity between the opposing parties; the Protestants, rendered more zealous against the erroneous practices and doctrines of Rome, sometimes exceeded the bounds of decency, and interrupted its ceremonies, treating with contempt those who, in Catholic estimation, are most respected.

The inhuman vengeance of taking out of their graves the Protestant corpses which were laid near to Catholic ones was now resumed, and a civil war was nearly being rekindled by the indignation it caused. An esteemed Protestant lady having been buried, not even in a Catholic burying-ground, but in a cemetery close adjoining it, the judges of the town, with the sanction of the bishop, ordered her body to be taken up; but more than two hundred gentlemen met around the grave, and vowed to sacrifice their lives rather than suffer the disinterment to be made. As soon as the king heard of what was going on, he sent orders to both parties to keep off the ground, and summoned the unjust judges to appear before him, and answer to him for the unholy orders they had issued.

Henry iv. was now firmly established on the throne of France, and Sully, more worthy of esteem as an able minister of finance than as a religious adviser, was aiding him in carrying out those extensive plans of national improvement or foreign policy, which one life could never hope to complete. The exchequer was

in a more prosperous state than it had long been in; a devastated land was once more flourishing; Henry was no longer "a king without a kingdom, nor a warrior without the means of war," but he was still "a husband without a wife." The licentiousness of Margaret of Valois, to whom he was still bound by law, had disgraced even the court of her brother, and given a sort of excuse to the libertine conduct of her husband. There was no legal heir to the throne of France, and the death of Henry must expose the state to all the distractions which had previously ruined it. Queen Margaret finally consented to a divorce, and Sully proposed that Henry should marry Marie de' Medici, the niece of the famous Catharine. "She is," he answered, "of the race of the queen-mother, who wrought such harm to France and to me."

But his politic minister went to Italy to negotiate the marriage. On his return, the king asked him whence he came. "We come, sire," I replied, "from marrying you. Henry remained a quarter of an hour as if he had been struck by a thunderbolt. . . . He owned to me afterwards, that the fear of being no happier in his second marriage than he had been in his first was the cause of his irresolution. Strange caprice of the human mind ! A prince, who had extricated himself with glory from a thousand cruel dissensions in war and policy, trembled at the very idea of domestic strife, and was more troubled by such

a prospect than when an Italian, who had come to Paris with a design to murder him, was discovered in his court."

Henry's marriage with Marie de' Medici was as unhappy as such a prelude as this might seem to predict, and Sully might well regret the results of his political influence. The birth of the dauphin was the bright spot that marked this unhappy union. Henry iv. placed in the infant hand of the heir to the line of Bourbon the hilt of his well-tried sword, and telling his queen that God had sent them what they wanted, he said to the new-born babe, "Mayest thou, my son, employ this sword for the glory of God, the defence of the crown, and the good of the people!" The prayer was not granted; that infant was afterwards Louis XIII., a weak, unworthy king.

We must pass on to the closing scene of the eventful life of Henry iv., busy in extensive schemes of national polity, engaged in plans for the welfare of his kingdom, forming projects incapable of realization, and preparing to set out on a great military expedition, the real object of which was never made known, though it was thought to be partly connected with a private affair derogatory to the character of a just monarch, and unsuitable to a man of years. "The head," says Sully, "which gave motion to this vast body was to be laid low, and that by a murder. The death of the king began to be talked of as a Divine inspiration, because it was prophesied by a nun held in high estimation.

It was this nun whom the faction made use of to persuade the queen to be crowned with all the ceremony necessary to preserve her authority after the death of the king, which they said was not far off."

This dreadful event was talked of almost everywhere, and the very moment of its occurrence announced in various distant places. Henry himself, without ever having heard these rumours, had apparently the same presentiment, and an unaccountable foreboding made him dread the queen's coronation, and desire to get away from Paris. "I feel," he said to Sully, "that some fatal accident will happen." Then, after a profound reverie, he cried, "I shall die in this place; they will murder me here."

"The night before the unhappy day," says another of his contemporaries, "his majesty could take no rest; in the night he was found on his knees, praying in bed; when he rose, he retired into his closet for the same purpose; his attendants, wondering that he stayed so long, followed to see if anything had happened; the king was displeased, and said, 'Why will these people always oppose what is for my good?' An astrologer had predicted that that day should be fatal to him, and therefore the young duke of Vendôme urged him not to go out, but the king told him the astrologer was an old fool. He went to mass, at the convent of the Benedictine monks, and thither the wretched and fanatic murderer, Ravallac, followed him, and

would then have stabbed him, but the king was observed to be so fervent in his devotions that the blow was delayed. After dinner, he lay down to repose, but not being able to sleep, he rose again, restless, pensive, and uneasy. The captain of the guard, to whom he spoke, advised him to take the air ; he seemed glad of the proposal, and said he would go to visit Sully, who was ill.

“Ravaillac had been all day hovering about the Louvre, and, hearing the royal carriage was ordered, is said to have muttered, ‘I have thee now—thou art lost!’ The coach, after the fashion of the time, was open at the sides, having curtains to be drawn occasionally ; the king ordered these to be put up, and refused to have his guards, but six noblemen were in the coach with him. It turned into a narrow street, which was nearly filled across by two loaded carts ; while it remained stationary for the carts to be removed, Ravaillac, who had closely followed, mounted on the wheel, and struck the king on the left side with a knife ; the stroke scarcely grazed the skin, but caused him, by a natural movement, to raise his arm, thus exposing his heart to the assassin’s stroke, who twice struck the knife into it. The blood gushed from Henry’s mouth ; he fell dead on one of his attendants, murmuring the characteristic words, ‘It is nothing.’”

Such is the narrative of this dreadful and still mysterious murder, committed in full daylight in the streets of Paris, and in the presence



of six of the king's nobles ! The murderer stood in his place, holding the bloody knife in his hand, "as if he gloried in the greatest assassination that ever was committed." So ended the singular life of Henry iv., surnamed in France both the Great and the Good, the first of the line of Bourbon on that throne. Had he retained the profession of Protestantism, who can say that his latter end might not have been peace ? At all events, the Protestants whom he had left mourned him the most. They had most cause to do so. To the instigation of the Jesuits the death of Henry iv. has been generally attributed, and father Cotton, his confessor, was suspected of being accessory to the crime ; but some influence, probably from the highest quarter, hushed up the inquiry. The priest, to whom Ravailiac declared he had confessed, when questioned on the subject, said to the judge, that God, who on some persons had conferred the gift of tongues, on others that of prophesying, had on him conferred the gift of forgetting confessions. " Besides," he added, " we ecclesiastics know nothing of the world, and do not mingle in its affairs." " Rather," said the judge, " you are too busy with what passes in it. If it were as you say, things would have gone on better than they have done."

The fanatic Ravailiac endured, without criminalizing any one, such horrible tortures as a still semi-barbarous age employed to detect or punish crime. He said only, that he desired to kill the king, because he had not brought back

the followers of the pretended reformation to the Catholic church; that he had been told the king was going to make war on the pope, and wished to prevent his wicked expedition. When he signed his name to his declaration, he wrote under it this couplet,

“ *Que toujours en mon cœur  
Jesus soit vainqueur !* ”

which, in English, signifies, “ May Jesus be always conqueror in my heart ! ” Such is the singular perversion of which the mind is capable, when fanaticism and superstition take the place of knowledge and spiritual wisdom. Ravailiac expressed deep contrition when told that he had been guilty of a crime, affirming that he had not known that killing a king who would not reclaim the Protestants, and was said to be going to make war on the pope, would be thought a crime.

We cannot close the interesting history of Henry iv. without noticing briefly that of his only sister, the princess Catharine. She had been entirely brought up by her mother, the pious Jeanne d'Albret, free from the gross temptations and worldly trials that had beset her brother. As fervid and uncompromising in Protestant principles as her mother had been, she did not fear, in her more liberal-minded brother's court, when he had forsaken that religion, to show a steadfastness in her faith, in opposition to his desire that she should change it, which might reprove his liberality or indifference. When the Protestants brought

him complaints or petitions, he would often say, "Go to my sister; your affairs are managed by women now;" probably thus, in many cases, relieving himself from the murmurs of the Catholic party.

Catharine married a Catholic, the duke of Bar, but she refused to admit of the Catholic ceremonies on that occasion. Henry cut short the difficulty by summoning the betrothed parties unexpectedly into his cabinet, and having the archbishop of Rouen to unite them there, without the sacramental services of the church of Rome. Catharine immediately conducted her husband to a Protestant assembly, and the nuptial benediction was given by a Protestant minister. In her apartments in the royal palace, that worship was regularly performed, without any opposition from her brother. She had married in her fortieth year, having been previously prevented by the arts of Sully from another marriage; but this union, which did not last very long, was one of unbroken peace and affection, so much so, that she used to wish, on seeing a new married woman, that she might live as happily with her husband as she did. Peace, temporal as well as spiritual, is surely one of the sweetest fruits of the Spirit by which the disciples of Christ are made known. Henry was fondly attached to his sister; he grieved deeply at her death, and was much hurt when, instead of the usual condolences, the pope's ambassador expressed to him "the fears of his holiness for the salva-

tion of the princess, as she had died out of the bosom of the church." The king took this greatly amiss, and answered, with warmth, "I have not a doubt that my sister is saved."

Before continuing the eventful history of Protestantism in France, under the unworthy successor of the great Henry iv., it is desirable to glance over some of those industrial plans projected by him, which had a great influence on the lives and manners of the Protestants. A people truly religious can never be addicted to war, and, as soon as the necessity for war had ceased, and another means of existence opened to the French Protestants, we see them turning entirely to it. From the time that peace was restored to a long distracted land, Henry made great efforts to engage his people in honest industry. He invited artists and manufacturers from Italy and the Netherlands to instruct them in the arts for which their countries are famous. The great expense of silks, then becoming fashionable among persons of distinction, gave the king the idea of introducing the silk-worm into France. Sully opposed this measure, as only affording an inlet to luxury, and contended that inactive and mechanical pursuits would unfit the people for military life. Nevertheless, the first mulberry tree was brought from Italy, and planted in France, in the reign of Henry iv. The climate and soil were considered unsuited to the cultivation of silk-worms, and the ignorance of the cultivators did at first cause a failure ;

but its final success is known, and our Spital-fields manufactures were established by the Protestant emigrants from France.

The manufacture of the gold and silver brocades, which became such luxuries in the gorgeous reign of his grandson, Louis XIV., was commenced under the encouragement of Henry IV., together with that of crapes, leather, jewelry, a new sort of mirrors, and the first description of telescopes ; manufactures of iron, steel, and earthenware, were also promoted. By such useful arts, Henry, who had gained the appellation of "the good king," used to say, he hoped to see every subject of his in a better condition than he once described his own to be, namely, "able to have a fowl in his pot." He greatly encouraged architecture, built the grand gallery which connects the old palace of the Louvre with the Tuilleries, and projected the great canal between the Mediterranean and Atlantic, which Louis XIV. commenced. The three prayers of Henry IV. are all we shall add. "I daily pray," he said, "that God would grant me three things—first, the pardon of my enemies ; second, the victory over my passions, especially sensuality ; third, the power to use aright the authority He has given me, and never to abuse it."

If the confessor of Henry IV. were really the abettor of his shocking murder, would not such a fact tend to throw light on that king's real sentiments with regard to Protestantism, and to the continuance of his early prejudices in

its favour? To that father Cotton the secrets of his soul, however politically veiled from others, we must believe to be discovered; for Henry always observed the outward duties of his religion. We have wished to show something of his character as a man, a soldier, and a king, but the higher appellation of a disciple of Christ we have not given him. Yet may not faith in the promise that good seed, sown in the morning, shall after many days appear, lead us to hope, that, in the latter hours of life, the precepts of a godly mother, and the exhortations of gospel ministers, returned to his recollection, and that the king's prayers by night upon his bed found acceptance before a God of sovereign grace and mercy, through the one only Mediator and Advocate for sinners, who died the just for the unjust, the holy for the unholy—whose blood cleanseth from all sin—whose sacrifice of himself, once offered, hath made an end of all other sacrifices for sin for ever?

Henry iv. lamented the fact, that he found it easier to conquer his enemies than to subdue his own passions; he could not have sought that grace of God which gives us the will to do so, and worketh with us when we have that will. A sense of his sinfulness in this respect caused his prayer when going into an important battle: "If this day thou meanest to punish me for my sins, I bow to the stroke of thy justice. Spare not the guilty; but, Lord, in thy holy mercy, pity this poor land, and strike not the flock for the faults of the shepherd."

## CHAPTER VII.

LOUIS XIII. 1610—1643.

THE death of Henry IV. filled the French people generally with grief and fear; Sully, it was said, appeared more dead than alive; the terror of the Protestants exceeded all other; those of Paris apprehended that his murder, like that of Coligny, was only the signal for a renewal of the Bartholomew massacre. They began to escape from the capital with all speed; many got away, but the rest were either detained by force, or induced by persuasion to remain. Sully first shut himself up in the Bastile, where he prepared for a siege; but afterwards, finding it wiser to leave his fortification, he went, he says, grieved to his house, and said privately to his wife, "We are going to fall under the yoke of Spain and the Jesuits; the Protestants will not enjoy tranquillity long." His words were too prophetic.

Marie de' Medici was appointed regent of France: she met the chancellor as he came to inform her of her husband's death.—"Ah!" she cried, "the king is dead!" "Pardon me,

madam," he answered, "the king of France never dies." So, in one sense, it is, for the voices which cry, "The king is dead!" cry, too, "Long live the king!" But the son of Henry iv. was only eleven years old when he ascended the throne which his father had won so hardly, and filled so ably. It is seldom that a great man has a great son. Henry iv. was the son of the vacillating and rather insignificant king of Navarre, and the son of Henry iv. was the weak-minded, cruel, and favourite-governed Louis xiii.

His proceedings towards his Protestant subjects, on assuming the government of his kingdom, soon gave them cause to regret their former gallant leader and kind-hearted king. Yet, during his life-time, Henry iv. had often been accused by the Protestants of ingratitude, and partiality to his new religion; while the Catholics reproached, and finally murdered him, for befriending the Protestants. The duke of Bouillon had chiefly instigated the former sentiments. His constant aim was to stir up sedition against Henry iv. among the Protestant people. After the fatal conspiracy of marshal Biron, he had left France, fearing to be involved in his punishment, and retired to Germany, from whence he continued to excite the long agitated minds of the French Protestants by publishing pamphlets, which he pretended to be written by their adversaries, unfolding imaginary designs against them on the part of the government or the people. He besieged



the court of the peace-loving James I. of England, representing himself as the persecuted champion of Protestantism in France; even the great and wise Du Plessis Mornay was deceived by him, and wrote appeals to the king, which were the result of the fears Bouillon excited. Such conduct had tended to keep alive an uneasy spirit among a people who, though exposed to vexations and petty persecutions, were then protected by the law of the land, and were sure, while the edict of Nantes was maintained, of being able to sit under their vines and fig-trees in peace and safety. At one time, it was feared by the court that the Protestants would rise in a body and join the factious duke of Bouillon, who was urging them to negotiate for foreign aid; but the blessings of peace and industry were beginning to be felt, and they made use of no other weapon than that of remonstrance.

As soon as Henry IV. was dead, the duke appeared again in France; and his conduct, with regard to the Protestants, fully proved how little credit ought to be given to his sincerity on former occasions. The prince de Condé, also, the Roman Catholic son of the late Protestant leader, appeared on the scene as a pretender to the crown, and the duke of Bouillon advised him to turn Protestant, and put himself at the head of that party. Condé would not consent to do the first, but tried to obtain the Protestant interest.

The middle and lower classes of the Protestants had now settled down to the industrial

and trading occupations of life, and had increased in numbers and worldly prosperity. The higher orders had greatly fallen off, owing to the numerous abjurations which followed that of the late king by the nobles, or place-hunters, whose creed could be influenced by the hope of court favour. But some great men were still found to mislead Protestants and betray the Protestant cause. Among these were the duke de Bouillon and Lesdiguières. "The duke de Rohan was a sincere Huguenot," says a Jesuit writer, "and aimed at the good of his party. Sully was not very devout, but joined the Protestants because he was hurt at being excluded from public affairs. Bouillon was politic, using religion to forward his interests, and doing as much harm to the Catholics as the Protestants." Bouillon, however, was speedily bought over by Marie de' Medici to the side of the crown, and took an active, though insidious part, against the people he had so long laboured to influence, studying to corrupt them by bribery, and to ruin the veteran Sully, whose appointments at court were to reward his treachery.

Du Plessis Mornay and Sully had always been jealous of each other, and of their king's favour. Henry had thought as much of the opinion of the former in matters of faith, as he did of the advice of the latter in those of state policy. The loss of their king, and the dangers that appeared again likely to threaten their religion, made them friends. The cautious counsels of the ex-minister were, doubtless, a salutary check on the fervid zeal of the more

devout Du Plessis, which might have at once led him to proceedings fatal to himself, if not to his cause. In opposition to their upright conduct, appeared that of the lately clamorous Bouillon, who now received money from the court to buy over Protestant deputies to its interest. He also treacherously advised them to give up to the crown all the towns which they held for their own security; but he inadvertently betrayed himself, by alluding to the glory they would obtain by braving martyrdom.

The veteran D'Aubigné, the earliest comrade and friend of Henry of Navarre, whose strict Calvinistic principles, perhaps, biassed the sarcastic tone of the humour for which he was celebrated, replied to him, that it was a Christian duty to submit to martyrdom, but that to draw martyrdom on others, under the guise of friendship, was to play the part of a traitor and an executioner. The proposals, therefore, of the court were rejected, and the proceedings of the assembly of Saumur were consequently reported to be the first instance of Protestant disaffection to the government of Louis XIII., to which, notwithstanding, the Protestant body had at once, and voluntarily, offered its allegiance. Du Plessis Mornay, at this period, wrote a letter, entitled "The Mystery of Iniquity," directed against the papacy: it was condemned, and the publisher imprisoned for libel. The cloud appeared once more gathering around the Protestant church; many of its

fearful members, the lovers of quietness or of worldly goods, went over to the safer side ; such defalcations were generally from the higher classes ; but, alas ! many of the ministers apostatized, and took the higher salaries offered by the government. The sword or the flames had now been exchanged for more insidious, but not less effectual, weapons.

Louis XIII., instigated by young and frivolous favourites, at length threw off his mother's protracted authority ; her attempts to regain it caused him to confine her in the castle of Blois, from which she escaped with the help of one of the old warriors of the League, by means of a ladder of rope. Louis led an army against her, but peace being made temporarily between the royal mother and son, the latter was advised by Condé, who had tried to stir up the Protestants to rebellion, to march his forces into the province of Bearn, in order to reduce it to submission to the Catholic church. Bearn, that pleasant mountain land, had, until now, been a distinct principality, though, by the accession of its last prince, Henry of Navarre, to the throne of France, it had become united to that kingdom. Henry wished to leave it as his pious mother had left it to him. It had undergone, in the time of Jeanne d'Albret, a complete religious revolution, and all the church property was now in the hands of the Reformed. Complaints against such a state of things had been loud, and the restoration of the worship and property of the church of

Rome in the province of Bearn had been even made a condition of Henry's absolution. His son now undertook a work to which the father's principles, or feelings, were opposed. The cloud was, indeed, darkening over Protestantism in France; a little rest, a little refreshing, had been vouchsafed—perhaps not sufficiently improved and prized.

The parliament of Pau—the little capital of Bearn—resisted, as long as resistance was possible, the edict for the re-establishment of Popery: the law of arms prevailed, and Louis XIII. caused mass to be celebrated in the cathedral, from which, for the space of sixty years, it had been expelled, but where, ever since, it has been predominant. The priests of that religion might extol this triumph, and rejoice in the purification of their temples from the service of an imputed heresy, but it is a fact, proved by the sufferance of torture, property, and life itself, that the faith, whose visible rites were thus abolished, had taken deep hold on the hearts and souls of the people, and that the weapons used to drive it thence were unlike those employed to plant it, for they were *not* spiritual, but carnal.

At the same time, it must be remarked, that the persecutions now alluded to were yet future. No infringement of the edict in favour of Protestant liberty was yet formally permitted, and that worship was tolerated by the government of Louis XIII. D'Aubigné had become involved in the conflicts of the time;

he was obliged to flee from his native land. His life had passed in religious and civil conflict, the most painful, the most unspiritualizing of all lives to the Christian: he fled to the Protestant refuge, Geneva; there he was received with honour; and there, nine years afterwards, he died an exile, at the age of eighty. He had impoverished himself in the service of Protestantism, and in that of Henry IV. His uncompromising principles had withdrawn him from a king, to whom the religious tenets and talents of Sully were more adapted; by all parties he was both respected and feared; he was a man of talent, and his history, which, from the truthfulness of its details, was burned at Paris by the hangman on its first appearance, is generally drawn upon by later historians of the French Protestants.

The city of Rochelle, always the bulwark of Protestantism in France, was not intimidated by the approach of the royal army. The Protestant assemblies had been a general cause of offence to government. The opportunity they afforded for ministers to meet and discuss points of doctrine and discipline was certainly an agreeable privilege, at a time when religious intercourse was necessarily restricted. But questions of policy were also often agitated, and ebullitions of feeling were produced, which, though they would be disregarded by a tolerant and established government of the present day, proved a source of irritation to one so jealous of them as their own unhappily was. The

threatening aspect of affairs at this period occasioned the Protestants of Rochelle to call an assembly; the king, hearing of what was to take place, sent his commands to forbid it. The mayor of Rochelle, for his only answer, told the messenger that he was at liberty to leave the city. The elder, and more moderate Protestants, deplored a proceeding that was likely to precipitate the troubles which appeared ready to fall on their church. The aged Du Plessis called upon those who had not so long endured the burden and heat of the day, to count the cost of the step they were taking; many zealous ministers added their persuasions; but there were still more zealous ones within the walls of Rochelle, who animated the inhabitants to resist the king's encroachments on their liberty. It sickens the heart to think that a cause, so apparently trivial in itself, as that of holding a religious assembly, was the first ground of all the frightful calamities, which, for the third time in the history of Protestantism, befell the celebrated city of Rochelle.

The assembly was convened; its proceedings assumed much of the tone of a republican government. The royal seal was exchanged for their own device, bearing for its motto the words, "For Christ and the king." Louis prepared to besiege Rochelle; it was for some time doubtful whether the whole Protestant body was not to be included in his vengeance; but, by the advice of his wisest counsellors, he

published a declaration assuring all loyal Protestants of his protection, and resolution to enforce the edict of Nantes.

Such professions were, however, more in show than reality; the heart of the king went not with them. He made a progress in arms, acting only as the pageant which adorned his army, but everywhere receiving the submission of the terrified Protestants, who in peace had forgotten the former times; their fathers who had fought with Navarre, or remembered Coligny and Condé, had fallen on sleep, or, in a feeble and peace-loving age, feared the remembered miseries of war, instead of wishing to revive its spirit. The town of Montauban was the only one that boldly resisted the arms of Louis XIII., and imitated the example of Rochelle. The minister, Chamier, who had principally drawn up the edict of Nantes, exchanged the pen and the gown for the sword, and was killed defending a breach in the walls of Montauban. Whatever fancied glory may be shed on the soldier's similar death fades into darkness round that of the faithful minister of the gospel.

The good Du Plessis Mornay had been made governor of Saumur by Henry IV., whom he served from his nineteenth year; his son ordered the aged Protestant to resign the keys of the city. Du Plessis addressed to him the following letter: "Sire—Since my obedience and fidelity to the state are imputed to me as crimes, and, instead of the just reward of my



services, I have nothing to expect but new disgraces, I most humbly supplicate your majesty to allow me a passport for myself and my family to retire to a foreign land. There, at a distance from the proceedings and scenes which afflict me, I will pray to God for your prosperity and that of France. I will entreat him to pardon the authors of those counsels which have proved so disastrous to the public welfare, as well to my personal peace. Finally, to soothe, as far as possible, the bitterness of my grief, I will endeavour to forget that I am a Frenchman."

Du Plessis Mornay did not emigrate; that pious man, whose courage in arms had long been tried, whose integrity was unquestioned, whose fervid zeal for Protestantism was tempered with moderation in most instances, whose religion was not a name only, but a living, actuating power, through the influence of that faith which cometh down from above—Du Plessis Mornay, happily for himself, did not survive to witness or partake of the affliction that was coming upon the churches. He had lived to seventy-three years of age, and God took him from the evil to come.

Thus fade from us, as we advance into the later days of Protestantism in France, one and another of those who made its earlier course so interesting. The fathers have fallen asleep; we feel ourselves amid a new race; we are coming to its middle age; its worldliness strikes us at every step; the glow of its

youth is gone ; we look back to early times, when

“ Heaven did timely try its youth,  
Its faith, its courage, and its truth ;”

and the pen shrinks from recording the unworthy artifices of an unrighteous authority, to conquer by fraud and temptation the faith which, in former times, had been “ tried by fire ;” the weakness of an unprotected people, and the worldliness of their professed defenders. Protestant affairs, too, being now divided into various independent branches, we can no longer pursue their history as we could when they were combined in that of one head or leader — a Coligny, a Condé, or Henry of Navarre, whose career involved that of the body, which rallied around them, and formed, as it were, the focus of Protestantism in France.

The plans of their opponents, also, had changed ; extermination by fire or sword was no longer the policy of the French court with regard to the Protestants ; it had been adopted by monarchs less cruel than Louis XIII., but less capable of dissembling cruelty. The plan pursued by the king, or by his cruel and crafty minister, cardinal Richelieu, had rather the outward semblance of kindness. Money, promises, and places, were now the instruments of courtly persecution, and often proved more dangerous than the dungeon or the stake. Every Protestant leader of any note, with the exception of the duke of Rohan, son-in-law to

the firm old statesman, Sully, and his brother, deserted or betrayed the Protestant cause, and took a post of honour as his reward. The mode of examination pursued by a Catholic general with one who was thus forsaking the Protestant interest, was highly characteristic of the times. "Do you believe in transubstantiation?" "Yes," answered the duke de Lesdiguières. "Then you are to be constable of France," was the rejoinder; to which the new-made constable replied, that he was "always ready to obey his majesty's commands;" thus accepting the highest post in the kingdom on the condition of believing in transubstantiation. "So now, gentlemen," he added, "we will all go to mass."

The entire province of Foix, in the Pyrenees, once secured in the rights of the Protestant religion by the good queen of Navarre, was, in like manner, insidiously brought under the sway of Rome; a Catholic was first appointed to govern, and then a Jesuit was sent to convert it. Some worldly-minded ministers were everywhere found to prefer a present sufficiency, and a prospect of exemption from future trial, to the stinted means, uncertain payments, and dread of future persecution, which formed the lot of the Protestant clergy. One such was found in Foix, who declared himself unable to answer the arguments of the Jesuit missionary, and suffered his flock to abjure their religion, and even to pull down their temple. The example was followed, and

the same means employed, until the whole Protestant country of Foix, wherein the Catholic religion had not been tolerated by Jeanne d'Albret, became converted to the religion of the state. Among the converts was an old man of one hundred and ten years of age, whose zeal for Protestantism had, in his youth, moved him to make a journey to Geneva, in order to obtain from Calvin a reformed minister to preach the gospel in Foix. We must hope that the poor old man was unconscious of renouncing the faith he had so long and fervently held, and that, in his extreme old age, when reason was oppressed by the weight of years, some one annexed for him his name to the list of converts.

The declared policy of cardinal Richelieu, the powerful and dissimulative minister, or governor, of Louis XIII., was "to humble the nobles and destroy the Protestants of France." With regard to the latter, his measures were vigorous, and, in general, too successful. It was by means of intelligence, chiefly obtained by the labours of father Joseph, a bare-footed monk, who was his active coadjutor and confidant, and by the liberal use of the weapon now constantly employed, bribery, that the great cardinal Richelieu sought to exterminate Protestantism in France. It had braved years of persecution, loss, warfare, oppression, and poverty; honours, rewards, money, and temporal ease, were more fatal instruments in the hands of its adversaries. The very temptations

which the apostles of Christ, and our Lord himself, call upon us to avoid and resist, were thus used by the professed ministers of religion for the purpose of detaching professing Christians from the faith of their fathers, and inducing them to embrace one which those ministers asserted to be that of the only true and infallible church, while it thus countenanced practices which the whole tenor of the Bible condemns. The chaff was now blown away by the breath of worldly temptation, but, in many instances, it carried away some good seed with it; seed which, transplanted to an ungenial soil, could bring no fruit to perfection, but languished for that it had left. Numbers of Protestants, who fell into the snares laid for them, or were drawn away by affection for their friends, bitterly repented of their error, and some with grief returned to the church they had left.

The siege of Rochelle was conducted by cardinal Richelieu in person, adding the character of a general to his other multifarious offices. The details of this siege are truly horrible. Rochelle fell a victim to its own obstinacy, and to the ambition, or idle resentment, against the king of France, of that vain young Englishman, the duke of Buckingham, who stimulated its resistance by hopes of effectual succour from his royal master, Charles I., who, on his part, was unable, if not unwilling, to fulfil these hopes. The conduct of Charles I., and that of his generals at the siege of Rochelle, has been almost always condemned as insincere and base.

The situation of that king at home, and his connexion with Louis XIII., his brother-in-law, whose court so soon received the banished Roman Catholic queen of England, should be taken into consideration. Buckingham's expedition to Rochelle ended in worse than nothing; he withdrew from before it, leaving twelve hundred Englishmen dead or prisoners, and cruelly carrying away with him a vast quantity of corn from the famishing people.

Many of the Protestant ministers now urged the Rochellese to make terms with their king; but the advice was rejected. Richelieu drew the blockade closer; all supplies were cut off; starvation, and its accompaniment, pestilence, appeared within the walls of the doomed city. The mayor had pledged himself to put to death any one who spoke of surrender. A friend pointed out to him a person dying of hunger: "Are you not prepared for that?" said the mayor of Rochelle; "it shall be your fate and mine unless we obtain success." This succour appeared in sight; earl Denbigh brought an English fleet opposite Rochelle; the people rejoiced at the prospect of relief, but he weighed anchor and sailed back again. The reasons for such conduct were never made known. The cardinal promised the lives of the inhabitants, on condition of their surrender. A treaty was going on, when a messenger, at the risk of his life, made his way through the camp, and brought the citizens tidings, that an English fleet was preparing, by Buckingham and their

own general, Soubise, succour for their relief. "Tell the cardinal," said the mayor to the royal envoy with whom he had been in treaty, "that I am his very humble servant."

But when ready to sail, the duke of Buckingham was stabbed at Portsmouth by Felton, while talking in French to Soubise. Starvation finally caused the miserable Rochellese to yield. The awful number of twenty-two thousand lives had been sacrificed in that city, chiefly through famine and disease. Out of a garrison of six hundred soldiers, left by Buckingham, only twenty-two living skeletons remained. Louis XIII. could not enter to take possession of his conquest for some time; the dead lay unburied, and contagion raged; the living were now almost indifferent to the fate of their city. The king's troops took quiet possession of it, and gave bread to the famishing creatures, to many of whom their eagerness in devouring it proved fatal.

Toleration of Protestant worship was still accorded under the nominally existing edict of Nantes; but the policy of cardinal Richelieu with respect to that people was effectually promoted by the rebellion and obstinate resistance of Rochelle: that bulwark of Protestantism in France ceased henceforth to be a free independent Protestant city. For the space of seventy years Rochelle had been the city of refuge for Protestantism, in the kingdom that denied it toleration. We may lament that its fall was not more ennobled by its cause; from

this time it fell never to rise again—never to resume its rank as the Protestant capital of France. Cardinal Richelieu celebrated his triumph by performing high mass, on All Saints' day, October 29, 1628, in the cathedral, which had been devoted to the reformed worship ; and that cathedral, as well as the other formerly Catholic churches, were thenceforth reclaimed, although the Protestants were still allowed to worship in their own temples.

The municipal privileges and distinct magistracy, which had rendered Rochelle almost an independent city for ages antecedent to the Reformation, were now entirely abrogated. Its fortifications were razed, and no accession of Protestant inhabitants was permitted. Such was the fate of brave Rochelle, foremost in the annals of Protestant resolution and suffering. Let us, while we deplore it, remember Coligny's words : —“ If we have our religion, let us be content.”

Richelieu acquired immense influence and power by his exploits, in which, both as a general and priest, he had triumphed over heresy. His iron sway was exerted over the feeble-minded monarch, who felt, and at times resisted, a power he dreaded to be freed from ; for while he both hated and feared his powerful and crafty minister, Richelieu had only to feign illness, and threaten to retire from the cares of state, to make Louis submit to any measure he proposed as the terms on which he would continue to rule the kingdom and the king, to sway all the cabinets of Europe, and bend to



his power the haughty nobles and humble Protestants of France.

The power of cardinal Richelieu crushed Marie de' Medici, as if she had been the feeblest of the people; and the imperious wife of Henry iv., and mother of Louis xiii., was seen wandering in foreign lands, in want and misery. She came, a suppliant, to England, where her unhappy daughter, the queen of Charles i., could not help her; she finally went to Cologne, in Germany, and died there, in absolute destitution. The policy of Richelieu for the destruction of Protestantism in France, continued to be arts, not arms; while he keenly watched, and expeditiously removed, every rival of his power, and brought to his footstool the proud nobles he had resolved to humble, he still, by worldly temptations, sought to conquer spiritual convictions.

But, at this time, the state of the cardinal's own church was likely to drive many into Protestantism, and in fact did so. We shall only notice the story of the unfortunate priest, Urban Grandier. He had written a treatise in defence of clerical marriages, asserting such to have been the early usage of the church; but he had committed a more dangerous offence in satirising cardinal Richelieu, who could be a munificent friend, but was ever an implacable and irresistible foe. Grandier was chaplain to a convent of nuns, and these nuns were, in the seventeenth century, incited to form a scheme to destroy him worthy of the darkest age of a

sinful world. One of the sisters was said to be possessed by a demon; on the approach of anything sacred the demon threw her into frightful convulsions. The nuns declared their confessor to be a sorcerer; Grandier was arrested, and cast into prison on the charge; he was tried, defended himself skilfully, but was condemned, horribly tortured, and sentenced to be burned alive. The Jesuit who had been employed to exorcise the nuns, approached the priest in the midst of his agonies, while the fanatic multitude beheld with horror the punishment of what they considered to be the deadliest crime. The Jesuit carried a crucifix, which he assured them the sufferer, being under the influence of Satan, would not dare to kiss. The tortured priest approached with eagerness his lips to the symbol he still revered, but drew them back with a look of horror. "I knew it!" the Jesuit exclaimed, "the sorcerer could not kiss the sacred symbol of our redemption." Alas! for the littleness, as well as the enormity, of human sinfulness—that iron cross was almost red hot!

Urban Grandier died in the flames, as a sorcerer, and as a priest of the Roman Catholic church. He was not the only victim of the time. The deception was afterwards exposed by a nobleman, who went to the convent, saying that he had got a sacred relic, which he had been assured was of great value, and he wished to test its sacredness by bringing it to the nun who was possessed by a demon. He was per-

mitted to do so before many witnesses. The demon threw her into violent convulsions : the nobleman then opened the box containing the supposed relic, and exhibited a few feathers, which he had put into it for the purpose of exposing the cheat, clearing the fame of poor Urban Grandier, and saving other victims from a similar fate. The convent was then restored to peace, the demon was laid to rest, and the matter was hushed up. It is not, therefore, surprising, if, while branches that bore no fruit were taken from the stem of Protestantism by worldly guile, many were added to it from conviction of the truth ; conversions were made to the Protestant side from among the priesthood, the religious orders, and the laity, which were unlike those made to the religion of the state ; for those who joined the Protestant church at that period must have gone forth from Rome, like Lot from Sodom, leaving all behind, and fearing to cast a backward glance at what they left.

Cardinal Richelieu died A.D. 1642 ; Louis XIII., who had been his slave rather than his master, followed him to the grave six months afterwards, A. D. 1643. When the cardinal was about to receive the consecrated wafer, which, according to the popish doctrine of transubstantiation, is believed to contain the real body of our blessed Lord, he pointed to it, and said, " Behold my judge, who will shortly pronounce my final sentence ; I pray that he may condemn me, if, in my measures during my ministry, I ever

proposed any end but the advancement of religion and good of the state."

Louis XIII. lived only two years longer than his father's able and politic minister, the veteran Sully, who was twice his age. The former lived only forty-two years, and reigned thirty-three ; cardinal Richelieu died, aged and infirm, at fifty-seven. The difference between the court of Louis XIII. and that of Henry IV., is exemplified by an anecdote Sully relates. The unworthy son of his great master sent for him, to ask his advice on some question of state ; the young and frivolous courtiers by whom Louis was surrounded, laughed at the quaint and old-fashioned garb of the minister of Henry IV. Sully, turning to the king, calmly said, "Sire, when your father did me the honour to consult my opinion, he always first sent away the buffoons."

The venerable Beza died long before Sully, who records his pious death, and ascribes it to the effect produced by the eclipse of the sun, which, according to the superstition of the age, was believed to have a fatal influence on certain complaints.

## CHAPTER VIII.

LOUIS XIV. 1643—1685.

WE now come to an epoch in this history, in which we shall see Protestantism in France presenting an aspect quite different from what it has borne since the times of the peaceful and industrious Albigenses and Waldenses passed from our notice.

When the light of a re-found gospel first beamed forth on France, about one hundred and sixty years previous to the epoch we now approach, its doctrines were preached in peace, without sectarianism, without admixture of politics, without controversy, by wise, learned, and pious men, of whom the venerable Lefèvre, without separation from his church, was the first. The opposition of the church of Rome and of the French government, finally made the Protestants become an opposing body in the state which refused them toleration; Protestantism became identified with politics, and was drawn into the most unspiritualizing atmosphere of court cabals. The power of the feudal nobles was then great, and was the cause of constant faction; a powerful nobleman,

on any offence, retired from court, fortified his castle, and maintained war with his sovereign, until subdued by force, or pacified by promises. The oppressed Protestants, cast on the protection of such nobles, were too often made the instruments of their purposes. The politically discontented aristocracy sought the support of the religiously discontented people.

During all that time, the voice of the Protestants, as a body, was one—"Give us religious liberty, and we shall be satisfied." At length this voice was heard. Henry of Navarre had gained his own cause by means of fighting theirs. He forsook their faith, but he befriended their rights. Their most zealous minister, Chamier, chiefly drew up the edict of Nantes; the power of the intrepid Henry iv. forced it into a law of the land; "it was hailed with joy by the Protestants;" though its provisions were scanty, their toleration and religious worship were secured. From that time, Protestantism in France assumed another aspect from what it had borne during the reigns of Francis i., Henry ii., Francis ii., Charles ix., and Henry iii. Then the sword was almost its only implement; now we find the Protestants of France, under the spirit of peace and of religious toleration, filling a different position in their country.

Its commerce, its trade, its arts, manufactures, science, learning—are all adorned by them, and all reward their industry. The Protestants of France, instead of being like the wild man of the desert, whose hand was to be

against every man, and every man's hand against him, are a peaceful, industrious, rich, and prosperous part of the community. Their resistance to the offers of the prince de Condé, to rise against the regent government of Louis XIV., and their peaceable conduct in all the celebrated wars of the Fronde, carried on during his minority, obtained them many promises from the court, and caused the great cardinal Mazarin, the prime minister of France, to say of them, "I have no complaint to make against the little flocks; if they browse on bad herbage, they do not wander into bad paths." Their heresy was the "bad herbage," which an irreligious priest could overlook, but disloyalty would have been the "bad paths," which the prime minister could not pardon. The projects of Henry IV., in manufactures and useful arts, received a slight impetus in the reign of his son, but a much greater one in that of his grandson, Louis XIV. A law in the former reign was proposed, to enact that no gentleman was to lose his rank, or be considered as disgraced, by engaging in commerce!

The Protestants of France now included the best manufacturers, the most skilful artisans, the most useful mechanics, and most enterprising merchants of the kingdom. It is not, therefore, marvellous that they partook not in the civil strife which convulsed it during the minority of Louis XIV. The fact is worthy of notice, because, in itself, it proves that the revocation of the edict of Nantes, by which they

were driven either from their country or their faith, was the result of religious bigotry, and not, as was pretended, of political expediency.

Protestantism in France had entirely changed its aspect, though not its principles, in the interval that had elapsed between the general peace of Henry iv., and the revocation of his edict of Protestant toleration by Louis xiv., a period of about eighty-seven years. The early part of his reign has little connexion with the affairs of Protestantism—a proof in itself of the peaceable state of that portion of his subjects, during a period of civil war which threatened to overthrow his throne, and of foreign war which, notwithstanding the cruelties that disgraced his conquering armies, added the splendour of military glory to the brilliant reign of that luxurious and voluptuous monarch.

Louis xiv. always possessed what is termed a devotional cast of mind—a state of natural feeling, which may belong to the votaries of the cruel deities of India, as well as to the fervent disciple of a persecuting church. Even while leading a life of undisguised and exorbitant sinfulness, it is said he never passed a day, from his boyhood up, without hearing mass, except on one or two occasions, when military duty prevented; but it was only in his later years, and under the influence of the celebrated madame de Maintenon, that he became what is termed a devotee, and then, too, it was that he became a persecutor, for his zeal was “not according to knowledge.” Some idea of the nature



of his religion, even at that period, as being entirely involved in conformity to that of Rome, may be gathered from an anecdote told of him with respect to the Jansenists, whose tenets (although they did not separate from the church of Rome) approached as nearly as possible to those called Calvinistic. The duke of Orléans was about to make a tour in Italy, and Louis, who was told he had taken a Jansenist companion, remonstrated with him on such a choice. The duke, who, on the contrary, had selected a profligate companion for his tour, replied, in surprise, "So far from being a Jansenist, I doubt if he believes in God." "Ah!" replied the monarch, "I have then been misinformed;" and he made no further remonstrance. His love of absolute power is shown by a speech made to his mother, whom he always so far respected as not, during her life, to disgrace his court by the spectacle of unblushing and voluptuous profligacy which his wife had to witness; when very young, she once told him he was not master of himself; "At least," he replied, "I will show that I am the master of all who offend me."

To the private life of this renowned monarch it is needless to refer, nor to the brilliancy, luxury, and vice, that distinguished his court; suffice it to say, that having been denied the sacraments of his church, on account of his licentious conduct, by his confessor, Père la Chaise, who has given the name of his burying place to the well-known cemetery of Paris,

which grew around his tomb, he was made to promise, as an expiation for his offence, to extirpate the Protestant heresy from France, and a large addition was then made to the disgraceful fund for the conversion of Protestants by bribery. Never have there been more eloquent and eminent preachers of the Roman Catholic church, than those which the brilliant age of Louis XIV. produced. These preachers surrounded the devout and yet lascivious king; the learned and elegant Bossuet was one whom he believed must be irresistible in the conversion of heretics; but his own reclamation from a profligate life is ascribed to madame de Maintenon, whom he privately married on the death of his queen.

As this reputed conversion was evidenced by the great Protestant persecution which was accelerated by it, we must here notice the life of that singular woman, to whose extraordinary influence both circumstances are generally attributed. The aged Protestant, D'Aubigné, whose death was recorded in the last chapter, the friend of Jeanne d'Albret, and the companion in arms of her gallant son, Henry IV., could little have foreseen the fame which his grandchild was to gain in history, and the unhappy celebrity her name should acquire in that of Protestantism. That grandchild, Frances d'Aubigné, afterwards madame de Maintenon, was born in the prison where her father was confined. On his liberation, he abjured the Protestant religion, and took his family to the

West Indies. Little Frances became ill on the passage, and was apparently dead ; they had fastened her body to a plank, and were about to commit it to the sea, when the mother, clasping it in a last embrace, perceived signs of life. The child was preserved for an eventful career. The death of her father left his family utterly destitute. Frances and her mother returned to their native country, and the little girl was placed as a boarder in a convent by an aunt.

At the age of thirteen, Frances d'Aubigné was a most decided young Protestant, and bid fair to emulate the uncompromising principles of her grandfather. The efforts of nuns and priests were long unavailing ; she deplored her father's abjuration, and resisted all their arguments. But she became a Roman Catholic ; and her zeal for the religion she embraced, was as warm as her opposition to it had been. Her poverty caused her to be withdrawn from the convent, and the death of her mother left her in the most affecting state of destitution, without protectors, friends, or even food. She was about fifteen, exceedingly beautiful, finely formed, and graceful ; full of natural talent, and gifted with a remarkable degree of prudence and strong sense. She was introduced, accidentally, to the literary society which met at the house of the poet Scarron ; the indigent, ill-dressed, and scarcely educated girl, was received with favour by the first wits of a time which has been termed the Augustan age of France. Scarron was elderly, deformed, and paralytic ;

he pitied and admired the destitute girl, and wishing to see her intellects cultivated, proposed to her two plans for her future course—to go into a convent, or to be his wife and care-taker. She chose the last; and obtained a home, and the opportunities of improving herself by the highest society and study. His death left her again, while still young, in deplorable want.

A petition was made to Louis xiv., to afford the poor “widow Scarron,” as she was now called, a small pension, on account of her grandfather’s services to that king’s grandfather, Henry the Great. An interview with the lady whose interest she supplicated, caused her to be made governess to some of the king’s illegitimate children; and she finally was removed to court, with these children and their mother, a married woman, who shared, as madame de Montespan, all the honours of the lawful queen and wife of Louis xiv. The devotion she showed his children won the regard and liberality of the king; the gifts she received enabled her to purchase the estate and title of Maintenon, on which she dropped the ignominious name of “widow Scarron.”

Her influence over Louis increased as his years advanced, and his inclination for licentiousness declined; she detached him from all other favourites, was admitted to his private councils, inspired him with those more virtuous feelings which were perhaps calculated to promote her own views, and conducting herself with the most extraordinary calmness,

wisdom, and discretion, she advanced steadily, and with the strictest decorum, through an elevation of rank and fortune, that would have rendered a lighter brain giddy and caused a speedy fall, until she attained the mark she aimed at, and was privately married to "the great monarch," Louis XIV., when nearly fifty years of age ; after having been at fifteen a suppliant for the bread which was daily delivered to the poor at the gate of the Jesuit college. Her charities were unbounded, and the greater part of her life was devoted to religion, so that the king called her St. Frances.

It has been said, that the fear she felt lest he should remember against her her former profession of heresy, or suspect her of favouring her former religious party, led her to incite him to forward the Protestant conversion he had pledged himself to effect. At one time, when she spoke to him of the Protestants rather favourably, he answered, "You grieve me, madam, by speaking thus. May it not proceed from some lurking partiality for your former religion?" Madame de Maintenon was too worldly-wise, not to take warning from this speech. She tried to convert her Protestant relations ; and Louis sent her cousin "orders to be converted without delay." Villette asked for time, and his cousin demanded what time he would require. "At least one hundred years," he answered, "will be requisite ; ten it will take to learn to believe in the infallibility of men—twenty to believe in transubstantiation—a good

many more to learn to worship the virgin Mary"—in short, as the process of conversion was so tedious, madame de Maintenon deemed it most prudent to dispatch her heretical relative on a long voyage.

It is painful to read such a mixture of good and erroneous sentiments, as the following extracts from her letters display. "The king sometimes reads the Scriptures, and deems them the finest of all writings. He confesses his weakness, and admits his faults ; we must wait for the operation of grace. He thinks seriously about the conversion of the heretics, and in a short time that will be seen to in earnest." In another letter she says, "If God spares the king, there will not be a Huguenot left in France in twelve months." But we must do the granddaughter of D'Aubigné the justice to state, that the means which she was persuaded would be used for this end were not those of violence and cruelty. She wrote to her brother, whom she had made governor of a province, "I recommend the Catholics to your protection, but beg you will not use the Huguenots harshly. Have compassion on persons more unfortunate than guilty ; Henry iv., as well as other great men, have professed the same religion. It is necessary to convert them by kindness, of which Christ gave us an example ; such is the intention of the king. . . . Recollect that they are in the same errors in which we ourselves once were, and from which violence would never have withdrawn us."

The absolute will of the king caused many nominal abjurations of Protestantism, even before the time when Protestant nobles were offered a choice of conversion, or the Bastile. The great general Turenne, son of the Protestant chief, became a Catholic, and proposed the plan anew for re-uniting the church by means of mutual concessions. A Protestant synod rejected the proposal as impracticable. In his later years, Louis became a devotee, and the surest way to please or flatter him was to relate the number of conversions effected in obedience to his desire, or as the result of his plans; but he was not allowed to know the real nature of the proceedings adopted against his Protestant subjects by the Jesuits and his minister, Louvois.

At an early stage of the Protestant persecution, the advocate-general openly proposed the revocation of the edict of Nantes; and, perhaps, such a decided step would have been less cruel than those that were taken.

But it was only in the latter years of Louis XIV., that Protestant extermination was vigorously begun. When some legal proceedings appeared to threaten the extinction of their civil and religious liberty, numbers who were engaged in the commercial or trading concerns of life took timely warning, and converting their property into money, withdrew from their ungrateful land. Many who could follow the profession of their fathers as soldiers were cagerly hailed by William, prince

of Orange, who was watching for the throne of the last of the Stuarts in England. The French government took alarm; they did not wish to lose Protestant wealth and industry; they only desired to destroy the Protestant religion; that government was almost wholly ruled by the Jesuits. A law was passed to prevent emigration, and as the Protestants continued to depart, the penalty of attempted emigration was raised from fine or imprisonment, to confiscation, the galleys, or even death. But in the plan which the Jesuits drew up and submitted to the king, for the reduction of heresy in France, the revocation of the edict of Nantes was not proposed. The king was the slave of the Jesuits: why? since Louis XIV. was an absolute monarch. The answer is this: Louis had devout feelings and sinful passions; his confessor was a Jesuit; his conscience was guided by a Jesuit; his penances dictated by a Jesuit; his hope of salvation directed by a Jesuit. That Jesuit, Père la Chaise, promised madame de Maintenon, whom Louis XIV. called St. Frances, that the conversion of the Protestants should not cost one drop of blood! The measures to be pursued were not like those of a more barbaric age, but surely they were not less cruel.

Louis, in accordance with every fresh measure of progressive aggression on Protestant liberties, issued edict after edict, which confused, or were unknown to, an ignorant and occupied people; and the non-observance of



these various laws—virtually, but gradually, doing away with the edict of Nantes—was visited with severe punishment. Protestant ministers were forbidden to expostulate with parents who sent their children to Catholic schools; Protestant children were to profess Catholicism at the age of seven years; but Catholic children must not profess themselves Protestants until double that age, if boys, and the age of twelve, if girls. Protestants were ejected from all public offices. The collection of taxes and of the revenue had been entirely entrusted to the Protestants, and this mark of confidence was now withdrawn. No Protestant could henceforth be a notary, a doctor, an apothecary, bookseller, printer, or even grocer; no one in any trade could take an apprentice; the practice of Protestant surgeons was impeded, under the plea that they prevented the sick in the hospitals from being converted.

The chaff again was scattered; but, alas! in all such times some of the wheat will be driven away with it; and, perhaps, the most cruel of the laws at this period was that regarding relapsed heretics, as those were called who, having been induced weakly to abandon their faith, were led by conscience and feeling to return to it. The Protestant pastors still watched their stray sheep, and took every opportunity to regain them. We could not blame the Catholic priest for doing so, but the law of France, directed by the Jesuits, now made it death to any Protestant minister to see

or speak to a convert to Popery ; the sentence of perpetual banishment was decreed against the relapsed. Such a sentence might prevent levity, and lead the convert to count the cost of a step which could not be retraced ; but its effect was even greater than had been calculated upon. The converts to Popery, seduced by worldly interest or worldly affections, had often left their best convictions in the church they forsook. They frequently, in disguise, attended its service ; and their presence, when discovered, brought destruction on that place of worship ; the congregation was instantly dispersed, and the temple finally shut up.

Sometimes the populace, excited by the missionaries of Rome, chose to imagine the presence of a convert to Popery among the Protestant worshippers : they cried, "A relapsed heretic !" and the congregation broke up in terror ; the minister sought safety where it might be found ; the temple was left a prey to the mob, or to the soldiers. Notwithstanding all these cruel trials, the Protestants of France remained patient and tranquil in the land. They had no longer the means or disposition for war ; they were no longer soldiers, and had no longer a leader. The third of the line of Bourbon forgot who placed that line upon the throne of France. But his arbitrary and cruel-hearted minister, Louvois, persuaded him that missionaries and money were rapidly converting the descendants of the faithful followers of Henry iv., and the object of the dragoons who

were sent against them, and obtained the name of "the king's booted missionaries," was probably entirely concealed from a monarch, whose natural disposition inclined him to mildness, while his pride allowed him to brook no opposition to his will. If Louis XIV. said to any one, "I wish you to be converted;" he expected the wish to be realized forthwith.

The result of the dragonades, as the system of quartering dragoons on the Protestant people was called, was in one instance the nominal conversion of a whole village, who, in terror, forsook their religion, and embraced that of Rome; the inhabitants of another forsook all but their faith, and fled into a forest, houseless wanderers, having nothing, but possessing all things. Thousands contrived to elude the vigilance of the guards, and escape from their native land. In their choice of a place of refuge, it is interesting to observe a proof of the change wrought by time. The persecuted Protestants no longer fled to the mountains of Dauphiné, or Provence, or to the valleys of the Alps—their retreats in times of old—it was to the commercial and Protestant lands of Europe, and into the rising manufacturing towns of America, that they brought their trades, their arts, industry, or riches. The world had changed; knowledge was abroad; science had increased; but the spirit of Popery was unchanged.

While the most horrid cruelties that could be inflicted without causing death were perpetrated on the Protestants, the king was told that

“34,000 conversions had been made by measures of extraordinary mildness.” Such were the falsehoods, both as to numbers and means, that flattered the ear of a fanatic king, consoling himself, after a life of revolting lasciviousness, with an old age of dull and intolerant bigotry. “His orders,” says a French authoress, “were exceeded unknown to him, and cruelties committed which he would not have sanctioned ; but Louvois daily said to him, ‘ So many persons are converted, by the mere appearance of your majesty’s troops.’ ”

The hecatombs offered to bigotry in ruder ages, can be described with less difficulty than the cruelties against an unoffending and unresisting people, in a reign so comparatively recent. In the age of Louis XIV., on which, however its pretensions may have been exaggerated, talent, learning, and wit, undoubtedly shed their beams ; and piety, even in the bosom of the persecuting church, has been known to prevail—an age which religious eloquence adorned, and in which civilisation appears to have been attained—with the spectacle of glittering Versailles before us, its gorgeous fêtes, and pompous liberalities—with the recollection of the time presented to us, when the amenities of life, social privileges, and commercial interests, began to be understood ; when the sciences, arts, and trades were vigorously called into operation ; when luxury predominated, and when devotion was the fashion of the court—at such an epoch, to have to describe scenes and proceedings suit-

able to a heathen, or darkly popish age, is truly a painful task.\*

Christina, the young ex-queen of Sweden, who had embraced the Catholic religion, and renounced a Protestant throne, at this time came to France, and wrote afterwards to the French ambassador at Stockholm, on behalf of the persecuted Protestants of his country. "Soldiers," she said, "are strange apostles! . . . I learn that they fulfil their mission quite in their own fashion. I sympathize with so many ruined families, so many respectable persons, reduced to beggary. . . . France exercises, without remorse or fear, the greatest barbarities upon the best and most industrious portion of her people. When I think of the atrocious tortures inflicted on the Protestants, my heart heaves, and my tears flow." Such was probably the effect of early education on the daughter of the Protestant champion, Gustavus Adolphus, for Christina cannot be supposed to have possessed religious principles.

\* To avoid detailing these proceedings, we may briefly mention in a note, such acts as that of drenching Protestants with wine, by means of a funnel, and then carrying them to church in token of their conversion, that their names might swell the lists to be presented to the king; and that of hanging up women by their hair to a post, and setting fire to damp straw in the room, until suffocation either produced recantation of their faith, or showed they were determined to persist in it to death, which last event was not allowed to take place if it could be avoided, as the Jesuits had promised that the conversion of heretics should not "cost one drop of blood." The horrible device also of employing drummers to beat their drums under the windows of the sick, until pain, or the distraction of unhappy relatives, extorted a nominal abjuration. But the ingenuity of cruel minds is too great and too revolting to be dwelt upon here.

The edict of Nantes was still unrevoked ; no punishment could be legally inflicted on the Protestants for assembling to public worship, or for "praying to God in French."\* Their punishments proceeded from the supposed infringement of the numerous and perplexing laws by which the edict in their favour was virtually, but by piecemeal, repealed ; and these punishments consisted in every torture that could be inflicted without death. The rack was still in use, and many ministers were broken on the wheel, without offence or fault of theirs. Emigrants, if seized when escaping, were robbed of their property and of their clothes, and then sent to the galleys, plunged into dungeons, and even put to death. An author of the time says, "I admire the king's plan for ruining the Huguenots. The wars formerly carried on against them, and the exploit of St. Bartholomew, gave vigour to this sect, and increased it. His majesty has undermined it ; and the edict he has just given, supported by the dragoons and the preaching of Bourdaloue, is the finishing stroke."

One might imagine that the writer spoke satirically : but the edict he refers to was to revoke the celebrated edict of Nantes, more memorable from its revocation by Louis XIV. than it is from its promulgation by Henry IV. When the edict of Nantes was revoked, the granddaughter of the stern Protestant, D'Aubigné, had been two months married to the great

\* See History of Protestantism in France to the death of Charles IX.

monarch of France. In one of her letters, she says, "The king is well-pleased to have brought back the heretics to the church. I think with you, that these conversions are not all sincere ; but at least their children will be Catholics.' A great engineer, on the contrary, Vauban, said, "Compulsory conversions have inspired a horror of ecclesiastics." After the revocation of the edict, the king's minister, Louvois, wrote, "His majesty wishes extreme rigour to be practised towards all who object to follow his religion. Such persons as desire the stupid honour of being the last to be converted, must be urged to extremity."

"The revocation of the edict of Nantes," says a French writer, "without the least pretext or necessity, and the proscriptions which followed it, depopulated France of one-fourth of its subjects, ruined trade in all its branches, placed the country under the warranted pillage of dragoons, and authorized torments and executions, in which thousands of guiltless persons, both men and women, perished. Such was the abominable deed effected by flattery, fraud, and cruelty."

"What less than blood," says another French historian, "are exile, proscription, vexations, and tortures? Can any one reflect without shuddering, on the cruelties of the dragoons ; the disunion of families ; the sight of a numerous, flourishing people, now wandering, naked fugitives ; aged persons, men famous for knowledge and virtue, accustomed to a life of ease, now thrown into a dungeon, chained to the

oar, perishing under the lash of the galley-officers, and only for the sake of religion? . . . The revocation of the edict of Nantes was dictated by priests equally fanatic and crafty. This edict, the fruit of the wisdom of Henry iv., which even the sanguinary Richelieu had respected, was repealed by one most atrocious. The Protestants emigrated by thousands. Holland, England, and Germany, received them with open arms; they carried away immense sums of money; but what was still more valuable, they carried away their arts, manufactures, and industry, with which they had enriched their country as well as themselves. In a few years, France lost above 3,000,000 of such inhabitants."

Many of the French emigrants settled in England; many a family here is descended from them, and the silk manufacture of Spitalfields, and many other useful or elegant branches of art were introduced or established by them.

We have not dwelt long, nor entered fully, into the detail of the persecutions and sufferings of the Protestants, during the closing part of the reign of Louis xiv. Our reason has been, that the limits of this work obliged us to glance chiefly at what is least known, and we therefore dwelt on the prior events of the History of Protestantism in France.

The later years of Louis xiv. present to us the melancholy close of a brilliant reign. The history of the line of Bourbon on the throne of France, with the exception of that of its great



founder, Henry IV., presents almost a parallel to the history of the house of Stuart on the throne of England; an intimate connexion and alliance subsisted between them, and the last of the elder branch of the Bourbons might have reflected on that parallel when Charles X., driven from his kingdom by the revolution of 1830, occupied Holyrood, the ancient palace of the Stuarts in Scotland. Bigotry and arbitrary power drove both families from their thrones.

Since the last words of this work were written, another revolution, that of 1848, has taken place in France, and again, since that revolution, scenes have occurred in Paris which appear to form an awful commentary on parts of our history. "Never," says an English journal, of June, 1848, "never has Paris witnessed such a slaughter of her citizens by each other, since the dreadful massacre of St. Bartholomew's eve!" "Strange and terrible confusion," says an eye-witness of those scenes, "of the strongest passions and emotions of human nature! An utter dissolution of social order, and a desperate resistance to every species of authority; a hurly-burly of wild desires, impudent frauds, fanatic delusions, sanguinary passions, imperious and insatiable wants, the opening of all the phials of wrath, the saturnalia of a lawless, foodless, godless multitude! So vast, so horrible a desolation, wrought in the heart of a city by the hands of her own citizens, the world has not witnessed in the whole survey of historic memory, and the arms of a stranger and an enemy

would have been devoted to everlasting infamy, if they had inflicted so awful a chastisement on the great city of Paris. None but herself could punish her iniquities or inflict her doom."

France has long pretended to be a guide and a model to the rest of the civilized world. She has become its warning. Infidelity has there greatly superseded bigotry; but, alas! the fruits of each are still the same! Let us pray for the peace of our Jerusalem. In the religion of the gospel, the religion of peace, the religion of Christ, lies the security of a people, and the prosperity of a nation. "Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

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